DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AND INCLUSION:
YOUR GUIDE TO SUCCESS

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

"My son, Austin, has Autism. Visiting him in the classroom surrounded by other children with all kinds of disabilities, I saw the harsh reality they all would face as they grew older when it came to employment. But as my son's progress continued to surprise me, I also saw a grand possibility. And if we at Walgreens couldn't do something about it, who could?"

— Randy Lewis, Former Senior Vice President - Supply Chain & Logistics, Walgreens

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DISABILITY

SEARCH

Definition of Disability

The term "disability" is defined by the U.S. Department of Labor in various ways, depending on the context. This information can be found in the Additional Resources section in this guide or on the U.S. Department of Labor website. The Additional Resources section also contains an extensive list of the types of disabilities employers frequently ask about.

If you are reading this guide, it is likely you are about to begin your first disability employment and inclusion hiring initiative or expand an existing initiative to additional locations. Many companies are already tapping into this highly motivated, underrepresented workforce and are realizing a return on investment that goes well beyond fulfilling the need for manpower to include enhanced employee, customer and community engagement. The purpose of this guide is to help you create a program that successfully integrates people with disabilities into your own workforce.

As we begin to guide you through the process of creating a disability inclusion initiative, it is important to understand that a successful program, at its best, means people with disabilities are treated no differently than any other employee. They will be held to the same standards as the broader workforce: same pay, same performance expectations and same integrated work facilities.

If you have not yet participated in a disability employment and inclusion hiring initiative, you are likely to have many questions.

- What is the value of disability inclusion for my company?

- Where do I find a qualified talent pool?

- What kinds of accommodations need to be made available in the workplace?

- How will other employees react?

These issues and more are explored in this guide, which was created with input from experts in the field of disability employment and inclusion, as well as employers with on-the-ground experience. While every site and every community is unique and may require adjustments to meet specific needs, this guide provides resources, support and a launching point for your own success. For federal contractors, this will also help you fulfill your contractual requirement as it relates to people with disabilities (see).

INTRODUCTION

How to Use this Guide

This guide takes you through the process of creating and executing an effective disability employment and inclusion program, starting with the business case through evaluating your initial efforts.

In the following chapters you will find:

The Business Case at a Glance

How to use facts and figures that present a clear business case for hiring people with disabilities, along with some company examples.
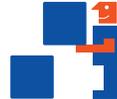
Building Your Culture of Inclusion

How to effectively communicate internally and externally, and ensure that employees understand how best to interact with people with disabilities.

Defining Your Initiative

How to clearly define and communicate your initiative so that it integrates into your company's broader culture, vision and values.

From Initial Screening to Performance Reviews

How to successfully navigate through this process.

The Planning Process

How to set objectives, put together your team, assess facility readiness and design your program.

Measuring Success

How to measure your success once your program is in place and decide on what comes next.

Identifying and Selecting Community Partners

How to find and work with these important resources that can be a valuable channel for qualified people with disabilities.

Additional Resources

Finally, the guide concludes with additional resources to support your efforts. This includes printable versions of anything designated as "Toolkit" throughout the guide.

Whenever you see the "Toolkit" icon, there will be a link to a printable document or a link back to the page where the tool is mentioned.

BUSINESS CASE

BUSINESS CASE

"We had high hopes when we started this initiative, but really didn't know how it would work out. It was a little bit of a leap of faith, and a lot about our beliefs in the value of all people regardless of their disabilities. And, of course, the results proved us more than right. Hiring people with disabilities was not a charitable issue; it clearly addressed a number of business needs."

— James Emmett, former Disability Program Manager, Walgreens

In This Chapter

Building the business case for hiring people with disabilities

Learning how Walgreens pioneered disability inclusion programs

Exploring the success stories of other standout brands

To help build your business case for hiring people with disabilities, take a look at the story these infographics tell. You will see compelling reasons why the inclusion of people with disabilities in your workforce is not just good, but great for your business.

Disability in America

The approximate number of people with disabilities in the United States:
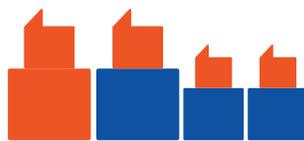
56 MILLION

The approximate percentage of U.S. families that have at least **one member** with a disability:

30%

The approximate percentage of U.S. families that have at least **one child** with a disability:

10%

BUSINESS CASE

Social and Business Impact

$220 BILLION

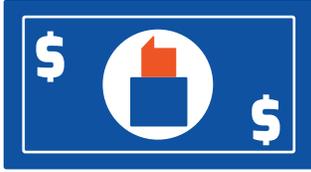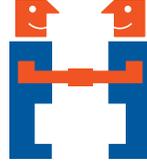People with disabilities in the United States have an annual discretionary spending power of $220 billion, which does not take into account family, friends and supporters

87%

of consumers said they "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they would prefer to give their business to companies that employ people with disabilities

A significant portion of a company's existing workforce will experience a disability during their employment

20% MID-FORTIES +

of workers will experience a disability lasting one or more years during their professional lives, and the rate accelerates when employees pass their mid-forties

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With the Baby Boomer generation retiring, people with disabilities are the largest untapped labor source, and their unemployment rate is high relative to the broader population
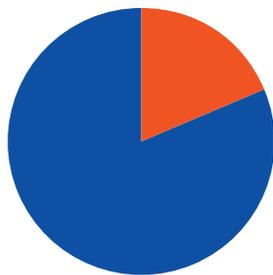
In 2013, 18.7% of persons with a disability were employed ...
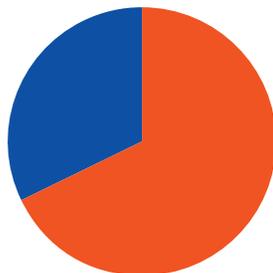
... the employment-population ratio for persons without a disability was **68.3%**

BUSINESS CASE

Hiring People with Disabilities Bridges "Doing Good" and "Good for Business"

Hiring people with disabilities provides real business benefits that extend far beyond goodwill. Businesses who hire people with disabilities report bottom line benefits that show proven ROI.

Bottom Line Benefits to Companies

Reduced Turnover

- With a well-run disability community outreach effort, turnover can be reduced by 20-30% compared to other labor pools, and the costs associated with turnover (training time, loss of productivity, overtime for other staff, Human Resources (HR) and payroll time) are decreased

Reduced Recruiting Costs

- A well-run outreach effort coordinates and takes advantage of recruiting resources of states, community-based organizations and schools, which can reduce the need for recruiting with ads and temporary agencies, and HR and recruiting department hours

Untapped Labor Pool

- Out of the approximately 56 million people with disabilities in the U.S. (19% of the U.S. population), 13.3 million reported difficulty finding a job but are able and seeking work

Increased Productivity & Workplace Safety

- In the right environments, employees with disabilities can thrive. Results from programs have shown workers with disabilities have had:
  - Equal to or greater productivity
  - Fewer safety incidents

Tax Credits & Incentives

- Sites may be eligible for Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC) with direct credits per hire with a disability
- Companies can tap state grants and incentives to set up training programs in partnership with vocational rehabilitation programs, schools and community-based organizations. This will result in having trained workers available immediately with little ramp-up time

Customer Outreach

- By setting up specific disability-related programs and completing a targeted marketing effort, companies can expect an increase in patronage from the disability community
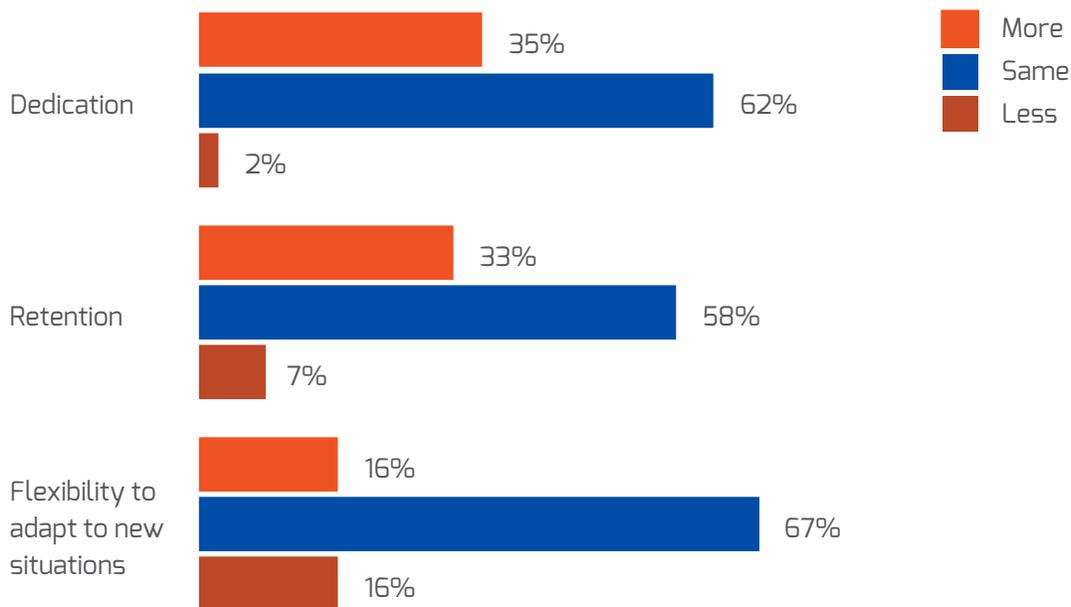
Business Results

- Companies can expect the same or better business results in terms of costs, productivity and throughput

BUSINESS CASE

Manager Perceptions of People with Disabilities Have Changed

Perception can be used as a proxy for whether disability employment and inclusion programs have been beneficial to managers. Managers experienced in these programs showed substantial improvements in their perceptions of employees with disabilities and the value they bring to the workplace. The most significant insights into managerial views include employee dedication, retention, and flexibility to adapt to new situations.

Legend:
- More
- Same
- Less

Dedication — More 35%, Same 62%, Less 2%
Retention — More 33%, Same 58%, Less 7%
Flexibility to adapt to new situations — More 16%, Same 67%, Less 16%

PERCEPTION	MORE	SAME	LESS
Dedication	35%	62%	2%
Retention	33%	58%	7%
Flexibility to adapt to new situations	16%	67%	16%

Although these figures may be surprising to some, to those who have a disability or have worked alongside anyone belonging to the diverse group of individuals that live and thrive with a disability, the numbers here reflect reality.

Source: Kessler/NOD Survey of Americans with Disabilities (conducted by Harris Interactive) 2010
411 senior manager were interviewed at a cross-section of companies with 50 or more employees

BUSINESS CASE

Best Practice: Walgreens Changes the Paradigm

"Most of us believe that people with disabilities cannot perform as well on the job as others. At Walgreens we found that to be untrue. And unfair. We ended up hiring over 1,000 people with disabilities. We didn't lower the bar when it came to performance but we did have to open the door wider to include those who are routinely overlooked. The results exceeded our wildest expectations. And the best work of our lives."

— Randy Lewis, Former Senior Vice President - Supply Chain & Logistics, Walgreens

The current wave of company-led disability employment and inclusion programs did not happen overnight. Much can be credited to Walgreens, which in 2007 emerged as a corporate leader in the field by aggressively and publicly championing the business case for hiring people with disabilities. This really was the beginning of a paradigm shift, paving the way for other national employers to implement their own initiatives.

Higher Productivity

- In the picking rate comparison, the population of people with disabilities had higher productivity on all three split cases

Lower Turnover

- Employee turnover for people with disabilities was 48% less than the remaining population

Better Safety Record

- In a study that measured relative incidents-accidents (# per 1,000 hours), people with disabilities had 34% fewer events than the remaining driving population

With the opening of what was then its newest generation of distribution centers in Anderson, South Carolina, employees with disabilities were trained to work side by side with other team members. Importantly, employees with disabilities had the same productivity goals, the same performance standards and the same pay as did the other employees.

Program Highlights[1]

- Building on that initiative, in 2010, Walgreens launched a pilot program called REDI (Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative), which was aimed at hiring people with disabilities for 10% of its retail position openings at its Dallas/Fort Worth area stores. Training for the pilot, developed in conjunction with the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), prepared candidates for Walgreens staff positions and other jobs in retail or customer service requiring similar skills.

- By November 2012, more than 400 candidates had completed REDI training. Of those, 66% acquired the full skill set needed to perform a service clerk position in a similar retail setting. By August 2014, the program had successfully employed more than 1,100 people with disabilities, with some sites achieving a 1:1 ratio of non-disabled employees and employees with disabilities.

[1] James P. Kaletta, Douglas J. Binks and Richard Robinson, "Creating an Inclusive Workplace," Professional Safety, June 2012

BUSINESS CASE

Best Practice: Walgreens Changes the Paradigm (continued)

- Walgreens' hiring of people with disabilities led to some very positive national publicity. Take a look at this video on YouTube, "Walgreens: What Works, on NBC Nightly News," to learn more about the positive human and business impacts.

- To hear from Walgreens employees — including people with disabilities, their managers and their families — take a look at this video, titled "Walgreens Distribution Center in Anderson County, South Carolina" on YouTube.

Building on Walgreens' Success

In the years since Walgreens' pioneering efforts, many companies have implemented similar hiring initiatives. Distribution centers led the charge by quickly demonstrating success, which then fueled a broader movement among other industries such as logistics, retail and hospitality.

Disability employment and inclusion programs initially thrived in distribution centers ...

- Over the past 10 years, distribution centers (DCs) have been the leading sites for disability employment and inclusion initiatives

- Employees with disabilities have proven to thrive in DCs:
    - Often available for flexible shifts, part-time and seasonal work
    - Many can excel at repetitive and mechanical work tasks
    - Can quickly learn the required skills to succeed

- Typical jobs are:
    - Picker/Loader
    - Merchandiser
    - Forklift driver

- Data captured in DCs is fueling a movement in logistics, retail and others industries where employees with disabilities are now thriving

... with many of the major industry players now successfully implementing similar programs

BUSINESS CASE

Building on Walgreens' Success (continued)

Pepsi ACT Taps People with Disabilities to Get the Job Done Well

Pepsi ACT (Achieving Change Together) is a national multiyear disability employment and inclusion initiative launched in 2013. Piloted in Nevada, Minnesota and Texas, the project increases the hiring and retention of job seekers with disabilities across a variety of career and experience levels at PepsiCo North American Beverages. Positions are full-time and eligible for benefits.

Early success is exemplified by PepsiCo's Las Vegas Certified Center, where half of the employees are people with disabilities. It is a high-performing environment and a model for efficiency and productivity, confirming that the company had hired the right people to get the job done well.

As of July 2015, Pepsi ACT had effectively launched in five U.S. cities with plans to continue expanding across PepsiCo North American Beverages.

UPS Delivers Innovation Through Transformative Transitional Learning Center

UPS demonstrates a staunch commitment to inclusion of people with disabilities through their innovative "Transitional Learning Center" (TLC) at the UPS Worldport facility in Louisville, KY. The TLC is a cooperative effort between UPS and the Louisville-based Coalition for Workforce Diversity.

At the TLC, people with disabilities experience UPS jobs through a two-week pre-employment training program that includes classroom training and hands-on simulation (utilizing a full simulation of the Worldport package handling facility). The focus is on job responsibilities, safety procedures and soft skills. As of October 2015, 72 of the 86 TLC trainees had been hired for UPS employment.

The turnover rate for TLC-trained employees was 14 percentage points less than the average rate for Worldport at-large. Importantly, the TLC has ushered sweeping culture change at the Worldport facility and has made an incalculable impact on its participants.

Bryce, a TLC graduate, cites his ability to grow and build a career as to why he loves working at UPS. Bryce was recently selected to become a Quality Trainer, training new hires — with and without disabilities — joining his team. Bryce is on track to achieve his ultimate goal of becoming his Team Supervisor. UPS has been recognized for its commitment to hiring people with disabilities with the APSE Large Employer of the Year Award for 2016.

DEFINING YOUR INITIATIVE

DEFINING YOUR INITIATIVE

"For P&G, hiring people with disabilities has been so much more than a Diversity and Inclusion effort, and part of our success comes from clarity around what we want to achieve. Throughout our process we have discovered that Disability Inclusion is a great strategy to tap into new resources to fill open positions. In our experience, employees with disabilities are dedicated, perform well, and their presence not only positively contributed to the organization, but also to our reputation in the community as a great place to work."

— Miguel Garcia, NA Transportation and Warehousing Finance Associate Director, P&G

In This Chapter

Defining your initiative so that it integrates into your company's broader culture, vision and values

Learning how P&G defined its Project WIN

Choosing from three broad models for implementation

Implementation Models: Choosing the Right One for You

How you choose to begin your disability employment and inclusion hiring initiative will be based on your individual circumstances. Finding the pathway that is right for you will be a pivotal decision. The following page outlines three models for your consideration.

DEFINING YOUR INITIATIVE

Three Broad Models for Implementing Disability Employment and Inclusion Programs

1. Grassroots Initiative

Characterized by a decentralized and organic structure. Some companies start with a grassroots initiative and then move on to incorporate other models.

Benefits

- Allows proactive local sites
- Delivers immediate impact priorities
- Allows for the highest level of customization to meet local needs

Challenges

- Limits ability to easily replicate and scale without rallying internal support
- Creates situation for potential executive guidance misalignment

2. Pilot Program

Often guided from the executive level with development and management activities occurring among senior managers, this model is implemented at 1-4 local pilot sites. Pilot sites tend to be geographically diverse and with unique business or hiring needs, allowing simultaneous pilot site rollouts to uncover lessons learned and best practices applicable to a cross-section of company facilities.

Benefits

- Allows for customization
- Facilitates transfer of knowledge and learnings to aid in continuous improvement
- Creates track record and compelling case for change for broader rollout
- Delivers immediate impact and CEO-level visibility

Challenges

- Increases potential for "analysis paralysis" before moving on to national rollout
- Reduces level of standardization across the initiative

3. Full Scale Rollout

Characterized by a centrally coordinated initiative, typically at the corporate Human Resources and Operations levels.

Benefits

- Allows for highest level of standardization across the initiative
- Reaches more sites in less time

Challenges

- Limits agility in testing the strategy
- Limits flexibility in adapting the strategy
- Increases risk of project halting

DEFINING YOUR INITIATIVE

Three Broad Models for Implementing Disability Employment and Inclusion Programs (continued)

Low Commitment   **High Commitment**

1. Grassroots Initiative

Best suited when:

- Each site is autonomous and the setup is unique:
    – HR is site-based (no shared services department)
    – Sharing of best practices is not applicable

2. Pilot Program

Best suited when:

- Heterogeneous sites; need to experiment and learn from models before a full scale roll-out can occur
- Existing programs need to be expanded or assessed

3. Full Scale Rollout

Best suited when:

- Smaller operation; or
- When new operation/ business is being opened
- Multiple homogeneous sites; simple solutions with heavily centralized HR function

Best Practice: The Vision for P&G's Project WIN

When P&G undertook Project WIN, which stands for Workplace INclusion, to increase the number of employees with disabilities, they outlined a set of defining "is" and "is not" statements to describe their internal vision. This ensured that both key stakeholders in the initiative, as well as the broader workforce, were aligned on the program objective.

What it is

- Project WIN is a hiring strategy to find qualified employees and diversify the P&G workforce
- Employees with disabilities will be paid the hourly or salaried wage associated with the job they are hired to do: same pay, same expectations
- Employees with disabilities will be held to the same high standards as all other employees
- Employees with disabilities will work side by side with non-disabled employees, creating an inclusive work environment

What it is not

- Project WIN is not a charitable program
- This is not a program where employees with disabilities will make sub-minimum wage or reduced pay
- P&G will not lower performance expectations for employees with disabilities
- This is not a program where employees with disabilities work in separate facilities (no enclaves) or after hours

Clearly defining and communicating your initiative around hiring people with disabilities and how it integrates into your company's broader culture, vision and values will help everyone from C-suite to frontline workers understand and articulate the program's purpose.

PLANNING PROCESS

PLANNING PROCESS

"As with any new initiative, it is important to ensure proper planning and alignment with business objectives. It is no different when starting a disability inclusion program. Proper planning will ensure effective implementation, program adoption, growth and expansion."

— Meg O'Connell, President, Global Disability Inclusion

In This Chapter

Taking a long-term perspective and sample timeline

Assessing how a disability inclusion program fits into your site's goals

Building a team for success with internal and external partners

Be prepared to be patient. Implementing a disability employment and inclusion hiring program takes time. Here is a sample implementation process timeline for a pilot program leading to national rollout.

Ultimately, the length of time to reach meaningful employment levels will depend on a range of factors including site complexity, scale and policies and procedures.

Click here to view a full-size, printable version of the Sample Implementation Timeline

1. **BUY-IN**
   Secure senior leadership agreement to move forward with assessment (resources and concept). Ideally, buy-in includes:
   - Operations person with direct CEO report
   - HR and Talent Acquisition

2. **ASSESSMENT**
   Review company policies, practices, programs and procedures:
   - Workplace
   - Workforce
   - Marketplace

   Understand what needs to change

   Assess size of opportunity

3. **PLANNING**
   Develop plan to address identified gaps:
   - Resources needed
   - Timeline
   - Targets (milestones and outcomes)
   - Project lead and sponsor

   Approve the plan (head of operations)

4. **PILOT ROLLOUT**
   Select pilot sites:
   - Track progress against milestones and metrics
   - Execute internal communications plan

   Build local partnerships for local pipelines

   Translate learnings into revised rollout plan

5. **SCALE ROLLOUT**
   Implement internal communications for broader internal rollout (including goals, expectations, timeline, and marketing)

   Same as pilot but execute plan for national rollout

6. **STEADY STATE**
   Track, measure, report

   Finalize ongoing structure and ownership

   Implement external communications

PLANNING PROCESS

CEO Support Speeds the Process

The most effective compressor of timelines is senior management buy-in. The more visibility from your CEO, the quicker change occurs.

Assessing Site Impact

Having clearly defined the overall goals for your initiative, you will now want to assess how this will impact the site where you have chosen to begin your implementation.

Determine how a disability employment and inclusion program fits into your site's goals for hiring, production and value creation. For example, the site may want to:

- Increase the retention rate for certain positions or across a location
- Meet demand for a larger labor pool
- Reduce absenteeism for a department or location
- Lower recruitment costs for a facility or company

Evaluate available jobs and current openings based on a number of factors:

- Job title and description — technical and personal skills required
- Application and interview process
- Immediate supervision
- Organization of workplace, including employee non-work areas
- Safety
- Quality
- Communication styles

Determine whether current site staffing firms or contractors need assistance in understanding their role in ensuring the pipelines of talent include people with disabilities:

- Do they partner with local sources for talent with disabilities?
- Do they have resources and policies for reasonable accommodations?
- Do their staff members need training on recruiting and managing people with disabilities?

PLANNING PROCESS

Environmental and Job Analysis

As you start thinking about people with disabilities within the context of your broader employee population, consider:

**Toolkit: Environmental and Job Analysis
(Click here to go to the form)**

Diversity and Human Resource Goals

1. How many people do you hire per year, and what types of people do you look for?

2. What are your diversity goals in terms of hiring numbers, training and inclusion?

3. How do you recruit and who are your recruiting partners?

4. Where do you see the disability employment and inclusion program having the biggest impact in terms of your diversity and HR goals?

Employee Retention and Support History

5. What are your key strategies related to employee retention?

6. How do you support employees who may be struggling?

7. Have you made any reasonable accommodations in the past? If so, what were the supports and related performance concerns?

Incentive Planning

8. Do you tap into federal/state/local economic and workforce development incentives?

9. Do you pursue job training or other types of grants?

10. Do you collect Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)?

11. How would the potential incentives you secure through your disability employment and inclusion program be most impactful?

PLANNING PROCESS

Building Your Team

Identifying the right internal and external people for your initiative's implementation team is critical for the success of the program.

Best practice internal governance structures typically have three distinct tiers for successful implementation:

- **Project Sponsor:** Ideally a C-level executive
- **Site Champion:** Ideally a senior site operations manager
- **Working team:** Pulled from relevant functions across the site(s) where the program is being implemented such as HR, Operations, Training, Diversity & Inclusion, Marketing, Communications, Safety, Workers Compensation, Return-to-Work, Information Technology, etc.

This is how that model *might* look in terms of responsibilities and recommended minimum time commitments — though, as always, it is important that you develop a structure that is best suited for your organization.
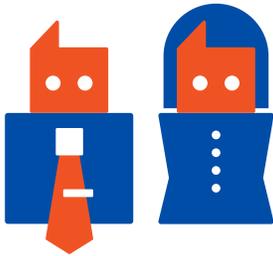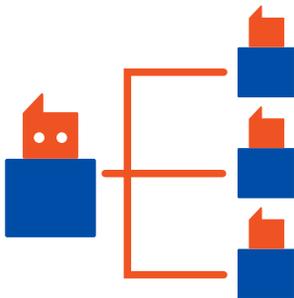
Project Sponsor
Two hours/month

Ideally C-level executive

Sets targets (i.e., disability inclusion percentage)

Actively and publicly sponsors initiative

Clears roadblocks (i.e., helps expedite changes)

Site Champion
Two hours/week

Site-level employee, preferably in a senior position within the site's operations line

Creates buy-in with management team and workforce

Brings together the work of the broader working team and pushes implementation agenda
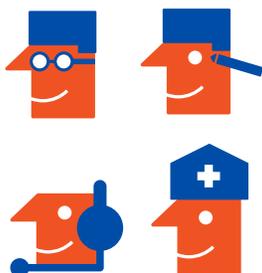
Site Working Team
Five hours/week/person

HR, Operations, Accommodations, Diversity, etc.

Broader working team that makes operational decisions within their area to push implementation forward

Responsible for day-to-day workstream tasks including communications and other necessary work product

PLANNING PROCESS

Potential External Partners

Maximizing your success will likely include partnering with a number of external agencies. These include:

Local nonprofit service providers

There are likely several nonprofit service providers seeking to place people with disabilities into permanent positions in your area. These organizations can be encouraged and guided to form collaborative networks in which a single service provider acts as the primary point of contact between the site and their local network of providers.

National nonprofit partner(s)

On a larger scale, employers seeking to replicate national hiring initiatives may find it beneficial to work with a nonprofit partner that can manage the heavy lifting of implementation and local partnership building on the ground. Successful national initiatives have engaged a single nonprofit partner to act as a liaison with providers and government agencies on the ground, while also assisting in planning and coordination as the program grows. The Arc and Easter Seals are two examples of this kind of partner.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a federally funded work support and placement program that provides job training, on-the-job support and job placement to people with disabilities. In many cases, companies and local site staff may not come into contact with these agencies until after hiring has started. VR often refers its clients to local service providers who in turn take on responsibility for placing the client with a company in the community. However, in some cases, VR will directly place the applicant with a potential company. In addition, VR provides job coaches to individuals as well as groups of people with disabilities hired in the same location. Job coaches assist in a variety of tasks that may arise on the job and help provide support to new hires as needed, though not indefinitely.

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)

CSAVR is a network comprised of the 80 Directors that manage the VR programs in every state, Washington, D.C., and U.S. territories. CSAVR coordinates the following resources:

National Employment Team (NET):

The NET is a national team of VR Business Consultants that provide direct access to employment-ready candidates in the public VR system, and support disability employment specialists in providing services to these candidates. Designed in collaboration with business partners and supported by VR leadership, the NET provides business customers in every state, Washington, D.C., and U.S. territories with a range of services — from basic disability training for staff, to pre-employment support, to building a talent pipeline, to retention services, to diversity and compliance strategies, to a range of technical support.

Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP):

TAP is an online system which includes both a national pool of Vocational Rehabilitation candidates looking for employment and a job posting system for businesses looking to hire people with disabilities. TAP also supports Virtual Job Fairs that include candidates with disabilities from across the U.S.

PLANNING PROCESS

Potential External Partners (continued)

Disability employment and inclusion consultants

- Experts in the field can play a strategic consulting role in the planning and implementation phases of hiring initiatives, and be turned to for assessment needs and ongoing technical support. Disability employment and inclusion consultants may come from private firms, nonprofit partners or be provided by a funding organization, such as a foundation, that partners with consultants when funding company-specific national employment initiatives.

Facility Readiness

During your planning phase, you will want to ensure your facility is ready to allow your new employees to function at their best. Keep in mind that any needed modifications will only make the site better for all employees. Installation of automatic doors, for example, will make entering your facility easier for all employees. In addition to physical facility readiness components, it is important to think about information, communications and technology (ICT) readiness and accessibility. In many cases, addressing ICT accessibility concerns can be beneficial for all employees, not just employees with disabilities.

**Toolkit: Facility Checklist
(Click here to go to checklist)**

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

"The key to success in workforce disability inclusion is the integrity of the program, especially as it relates to performance. It isn't about hiring any person with a disability; it is about hiring people with disabilities who can do the job well. Finding candidates can be challenging, but one of the approaches is to develop a partnership with agencies or groups who specialize in providing services to people with disabilities. Creating a mutual understanding of the goals of both the agency and the business helps to ensure a pipeline of candidates who are qualified for the jobs."

— Deb Russell, President, Deb Russell Inc.

In This Chapter

Finding and working with community partners

Recognizing agency red flags

Building agency collaboration

Service providers and community partners can help you find qualified candidates and provide guidance on how to effectively integrate people with disabilities into your workforce. Knowing how to find these partners is an important step. After that, developing and maintaining effective relationships to ensure they meet business objectives is critical.

VR services are typically provided by the state at little or no cost to the company. Some agencies will charge a minimal fee.

Using the Internet to Find Your Agencies

A simple internet search with your state name and vocational rehabilitation (VR) offices will generate a complete list of locations within each state. The website that lists contacts for VR agencies in all states is www.rehabnetwork.org.

State agencies are not the only organizations you will come across when researching disability employment service providers. There are also several nonprofit agencies (service providers) and even for-profit agencies that work with individuals with disabilities. One source you may want to check out is the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's list of state vocational rehabilitation agencies. Another source is the U.S. Department of Education state contacts page.

Likely, there are a few well-known national agencies in your community such as Easter Seals or The Arc.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Choosing the Right Partners

The needs of your business (facility's job types, required skill sets and goal for number of hires) are the most critical consideration in choosing any agency. With a list of your local agencies in hand, you can begin to determine which services they offer that will best help you succeed.

Some agencies not only provide candidates with disabilities, but also offer training, job coaching and ongoing project management support. In many cases, you will work with more than one agency in order to ensure a cross section of talent and abilities, and to obtain the number of new hires, interns or peak time employees needed at your location.

Importantly, remember to hold disability service organizations to the same standards as you would any vendor (even though you might not be paying for the agency's services). Make sure it is clear that you expect them to help you fill a business need by securing the very best talent for your job openings.

Toolkit: Items to Assess When Reviewing Service Providers (Click here to go to the assessment form)

Mission/Vision

What is the agency hoping to achieve? Some agencies are about family support, work or community projects. You will want to be sure that you understand the mission and focus of each agency. Does the agency define success the same way your company does? Do they recognize the same performance standards?

Work or Work Readiness Training

The goal of an agency's work readiness training should be integrated employment (work in the community). The disability employment and inclusion program is about hiring people to work at your facilities alongside other employees.

Placements

How many individuals with disabilities were placed in competitive work last year? Do they have the capacity to meet your company's hiring needs for this year?

Part-Time/Full-Time

Does the agency make part-time and full-time placements?

Tenure

What is the average tenure for each placement?

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Choosing the Right Partners (continued)

Training
What type of training does the agency offer employers (e.g., disability awareness and sensitivity, working with job coaches, etc.)?

Business Services
What services does the agency offer to employees beyond training? Determine whether they will help with disability accommodation assessments for employees who are not "their" clients.

Community Collaboration
Does/will the agency work with others in the community to fulfill your hiring needs? Many agencies can be "turf-focused," so this is an important item to test.

On-the-Job Supports
Does the agency offer to send a support person (typically called a "job coach") to help people with disabilities who may need a little extra help the first few days of acclimating to a new job? How long can that support continue if needed? If the employee starts to struggle later on (3, 6, 15 months into employment), will the agency send someone to help?

Employer References
What other companies have worked with the agency to help them meet their staffing needs? Get letters of reference from those companies, or call and ask questions about the agency's ability to meet business needs. If you are not sure which companies have worked with this agency, a local US Business Leadership Network (USBLN) affiliate may be able to provide helpful information.

Relationship with State Vocational Rehabilitation Services
How does the agency relate to state and local VR services?

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Caution: Use Discretion

Some agencies provide a "learn to work" or "sheltered workshop" environment. These programs bring people with disabilities into an employment or training workshop environment where they perform tasks that have been outsourced by employers as part of a learning experience. Sometimes, employees in these facilities are paid sub-minimum wage.

While many of these programs provide a valuable service to people with disabilities, they do not meet the goals of a competitive disability employment and inclusion program which is about equal jobs, equal pay and working side by side with other employees. If you meet an agency that provides this type of work, or offers work crews to come to your facility, ask about pay scale to ensure that any workers joining your in-house workforce or are part of a company-sanctioned outsourced team are paid minimum wage or better.

Red Flags

Sub-minimum Wage	You will want your employees to be paid minimum wage or better.
Lack of Collaboration	There can be a lot of competition among service providers, but you should look for an agency that is willing to work with other community providers, as well as the state/local VR, to help you obtain the talent you need.
90 Days and Gone	Many agencies work on a 90-day timeline, meaning that after an individual is successfully placed for 90 days, they are no longer involved or available for employer questions and concerns. Ask about the follow-up and how responsive they will be if you need additional assistance. There may be a fee for ongoing support beyond the first 90 days of employment.

Interviewing Potential Partners

In our Toolkit, you will find a guide for interviewing potential community partners. As always, we encourage you to tailor questions to cover what is important to you and your organization.

**Toolkit: Sample Agency Questionnaire
(Click here to go to the sample questionnaire)**

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Need for Multiple Agencies

It may be necessary for you to work with more than one community partner to help bring in all the talent you need. Whether one or more, it will be important to make clear that while your company wants to enhance hiring for people with disabilities, all hiring — including diversity hiring — means new hires must be able to meet the needs of the business. All talent must be qualified, trainable and able to meet all performance metrics and safety standards.

You can be most effective in working with multiple agencies by identifying a lead agency to serve as your "quarterback" with the other agencies. Choice of a lead is simply based on which one you and your core team determine to be the best fit for the role after going through in-person meetings with all considered agencies.

Building Collaboration Between Lead Agency and Others

If you are working with a lead agency, you will want to bring all of the agencies together to discuss your program's objectives and goals, your intent to work with all the agencies, and to begin outlining opportunities and expectations.

Make sure VR is invited to this meeting. Prior to this, a preliminary meeting with the lead agency will be helpful to discuss any possible obstacles as well as prepare for questions that might arise from the other agencies.

At your kickoff meeting, explain that your company assessed and met with several agencies in the community, and while each had its own strengths, your company chose one agency to serve as the lead for the disability employment and inclusion initiative. Define the lead agency's role while highlighting the expectation of all agencies working closely together to meet your company's needs.

Conducting the kickoff meeting at your site has three key benefits:

1. Firmly establishes you, the company, as the driver of the meeting and not a service provider agency. This is about the work at your site. It lets the agencies know you are setting the standards and the expectations.

2. Sets up the lead agency and roles and responsibilities; demonstrates that you have made the choice of who to work with, and how the partnership will work.

3. Allows for facility tour; helps the agencies understand job requirements and expectations.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Defining Expectations; Establishing Roles and Responsibilities

Before you outline roles and responsibilities for the agencies, have a clear understanding of where you may need assistance, where you can be flexible and where you require strict adherence to standards.

Use this as a guide as you create a Roles and Responsibilities document for each agency. While it does not have to be a formal contract, it should clearly state what the agency will be responsible for, the acceptable timing for meeting deliverables and the corresponding responsibilities of your company.

Facility Tours

Providing facility tours is an excellent opportunity to share job specifications and expectations, as well as facility culture, with service providers. In fact, many employers require that any agency providing candidates to their disability employment and inclusion hiring initiative must tour the facility before sending a referral. It will set the stage for helping the agency understand the facility, job requirements, safety requirements, stamina, interaction with managers and coworkers, and much more. This is especially true for manufacturing and distribution centers, but may not be required in banking or retail, for example, where there already is a basic understanding of the work environment.

In addition to providing tours for agencies, from time to time you may receive requests from parents to take a facility tour. This is not atypical. Parents often hear about a distribution center or manufacturing facility and assume the worst — moving equipment, heavy boxes, and a fast-paced and unsafe environment for their son or daughter with a disability.

Parent tours should be accommodated when possible, preferably at the same time that agency tours are conducted. This will help eliminate multiple tours during the same time period and also allow parents to discuss the work with agency counselors and case managers.
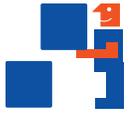
BUILDING YOUR CULTURE

BUILDING YOUR CULTURE

"The positive energy fostered by a diverse and inclusive team is exemplified in TRU's distribution centers, through the team's "Differently-Abled" hiring initiative. Over the past few years, our DC's have hired over 250 team members with disabilities, many of whom have had difficulty securing a job throughout their lives. This concerted talent strategy has reminded us that valuing each team member's strengths means valuing diversity. That, in turn, has enhanced our collective team's contribution and commitment to delivering joy to children of all ages!"

— Jeff Kellan, Vice President - Supply Chain, Toys "R" Us

Building your communications plan	Understanding the basics of disability etiquette	Interacting with employees with specific disabilities

In This Chapter

As with any new organizational initiative, communicating openly with employees is essential to ensuring buy-in from the workplace and the success of your disability employment and inclusion program. Additionally, you may decide you want to communicate to external audiences for reasons such as helping to grow your recruiting pipeline or building awareness and excitement around your leadership in diversity and inclusion.

You will work with your site communications team or your corporate communications team to develop a plan based on your communications goals. It will contain specific messages, channels of delivery and timing for each of your relevant audiences.

Consider These Potential Audiences

Internal Audiences

- Employees at large
- Managers and team leads
- Executive leadership
- Employee resource group
- Site leadership
- Frontline supervisors
- Union leadership

External Audiences

- Local and area public school system
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Provider agencies (when applicable)
- Local government
- State government
- Corporate customers
- Individual customers
- Local media

BUILDING YOUR CULTURE

The Communications Cascade

The "communications cascade" is an effective way of engaging internal audiences. In this model, your messages flow from the CEO/head of the site to his or her leadership team/department leads. Department leads then share the same messages with their managers, and the managers are then tasked with communicating with their teams of frontline employees.

CEO/Head of Site

Department Leads to Managers

Managers to Front Line Employees
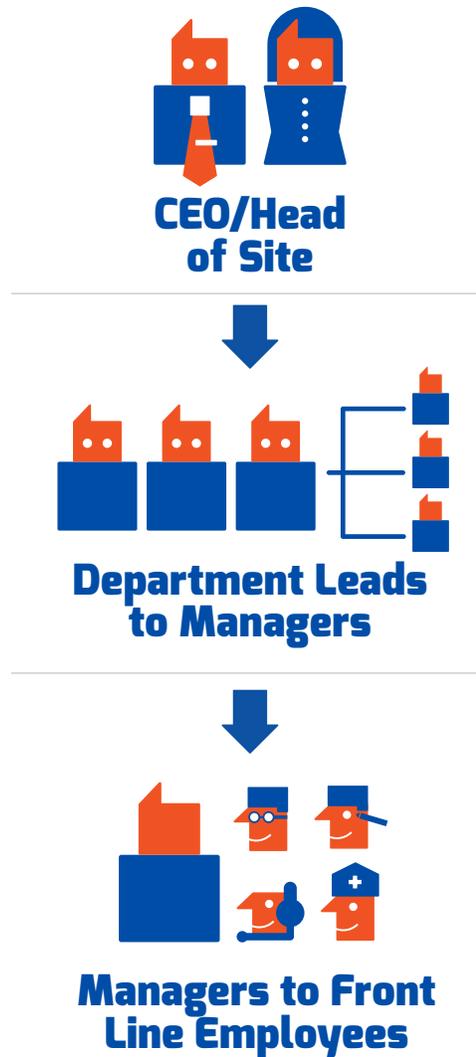
For this to be successful, it is essential that everyone uses the same set of talking points and understands that following the script is mandatory, not discretionary. The speaking points will announce your initiative, clearly explain why it is positive for the company and employees, and cover what might be considered when interacting with your new employees. It is also helpful to provide the leaders with a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to help them answer employee questions.

Of course, this is best when reinforced on a continual basis through communications in other existing company communications channels such as Town Hall Meetings, newsletters and intranet sites.

BUILDING YOUR CULTURE

Encouraging Self-Identification

A critical component of building an inclusive workplace is recognizing and supporting current employees who have disabilities. Whereas policies in the past have discouraged employers from asking employees about disability status, new regulations under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require federal contractors to invite employees to self-identify as an individual with a disability — a best practice that all companies should follow.

Encouraging self-identification can take many forms — from including information about self-identification in regularly scheduled employee communications, to full-blown self-identification campaigns. The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) has developed a form for federal contractors to use to invite employees or applicants to self-identify as an individual with a disability. At the very least, companies should make this form readily available for employees to access, and encourage self-identification using this form on a regular basis.

Fostering an Inclusive Workplace

Before you begin interviewing and hiring people with disabilities, it is important to provide training to your current workforce on disabilities. Investing in this training upfront will help foster that culture of inclusion you want to achieve.

Goals of this training include:

- Providing a basic overview of the disability community
- Supporting employees in becoming comfortable working with their coworkers with disabilities
- Improving communication techniques and skills, and reducing misunderstandings
- Providing workers with strategies to handle their own fears and anxieties related to disability

BUILDING YOUR CULTURE

Basics of Disability Etiquette

· Treat people with disabilities as you would like to be treated

· Smile and be friendly

· Use a normal tone of voice

· Talk to the person with the disability, not to his aide, coach or sign language interpreter

· Resist talking about disability unless it is relevant to the task at hand

· Never assume that a person with disabilities needs help. Ask if he or she needs help before taking action

Practical Tips – Interacting with a Person Who …

Uses a Wheelchair

· Rearrange objects to accommodate a wheelchair before the person arrives

· Consider distance, weather conditions and physical obstacles (curbs, stairs, steep hills, etc.) when giving directions to a person in a wheelchair

· Do not push, lean on or hold onto a person's wheelchair unless the person asks you to. The wheelchair is part of his or her personal space.

· Know where to find accessible restrooms, telephones, water fountains, etc., in case the person asks for help with finding them

· See additional tips below for mobility challenges

Is Deaf/Hard of Hearing

· Let the person take the lead in establishing the communication mode, such as lip-reading, sign language or writing notes

· Talk directly to the person, even when a sign language interpreter is present

· If the person lip-reads, face him or her directly, speak clearly and with a moderate pace

· In a large meeting, have people raise their hands and have the meeting leader point to the next person who speaks; this will allow for easier lip-reading, or for appropriate time for the interpreter to begin signing

· Do not be afraid to ask and answer questions

· Do not position yourself in front of a window or harsh light or the person who is deaf or hard of hearing will have difficulty seeing you

· Do not talk over other people

BUILDING YOUR CULTURE

Practical Tips – Interacting with a Person Who ... (continued)

Has a Speech Impairment

- Pay attention, be patient and wait for the person to complete a word or thought — do not finish it for the person
- Ask the person to repeat what is said if you do not understand. Tell the person what you heard and see if it is close to what he or she is saying
- Be prepared for various devices or techniques used to enhance or augment speech. Do not be afraid to communicate with someone who uses an alphabet board or a computer with synthesized speech.
- Do not be afraid to ask and answer questions
- Try moving to a quieter area if you are having difficulty hearing/ understanding

Has Vision Loss/Impairment, Blindness

- When greeting the person, identify yourself and introduce others who may be present
- When asked to guide someone with a sight disability, never push or pull the person; allow him or her to take your arm, and then walk slightly ahead. Point out doors, stairs or curbs as you approach them.
- As you enter a room with the person, describe the layout and location of furniture, etc. Be specific when describing the location of objects.
- Do not leave the person without excusing yourself first
- Do not pet or distract a service dog; the dog is responsible for its owner's safety and is always working. It is not a pet.

Has a Cognitive Disability

- Keep your communication simple. Rephrase comments or questions for better clarity.
- Stay focused on the person as he or she responds to you
- Allow the person time to tell or show you what he or she wants
- Ask the person to repeat what is said if you do not understand. Tell the person what you heard and see if it is close to what he or she is saying.

BUILDING YOUR CULTURE

Practical Tips – Interacting with a Person Who … (continued)

Has a Mobility Challenge

- Ensure accessible location for work areas and meetings, wide aisles that are kept clear of obstacles and accessible bathrooms close to primary work space
- Provide extra time to get from one work area to another
- Provide priority seating in meetings and trainings
- Arrange for notes/minutes to be provided to employees after meetings
- Make computer equipment software available (speech-to-text, word prediction, keyboard modifications) when possible
- Provide accessible parking in close proximity to the building
- Arrange for adjustable desks and/or tables in work areas
- Allow for advanced planning for business trips, when possible, to ensure accessibility

Has a Mental Health Condition

- Avoid stereotypes and assumptions about the individual and how he or she might act
- Recognize but respect when people are acting differently than they typically do. Keep in mind that a person acting out of character may have difficulty interpreting social cues.
- Be patient. Allow the individual time to think and answer questions.
- Know that stress can aggravate a situation. Taking steps to alleviate some of that stress may de-escalate the situation.
- In a crisis, stay calm and be supportive as you would with anyone. Ask how you can help, and find out if there is a support person who can be sent for.

SCREENING & REVIEWS

SCREENING & REVIEWS

"Our employees with disabilities are incredible workers — willing and eager to learn, and focused on productivity and meeting team goals. It didn't take me long to realize that I wasn't hiring people with disabilities, I was hiring the best people for the job."

— Julio Padilla, Manager, PepsiCo Las Vegas Certified Center

In This Chapter

Screening and interviewing candidates

Onboarding new hires, along with training and performance review best practices

Providing on-the-job accommodations and support

Screening and Interviewing Candidates

Depending on your use of partner agencies and the way that they operate, some or all of the pre-screening process may occur within the agency. Generally speaking, screening should focus on three broad categories:

- Consideration of the requirements of the job
- Physical ability of the candidates to perform specific functions
- Social and communication requirements for the position and working with others

We suggest you review your application and interview process to understand where people with disabilities might be getting lost in the system, and consider whether any adjustments are warranted. AskJAN has compiled some best practices for accessibility in applicant tracking systems and pre-hire tests.

**Toolkit: Application and Interview Process Assessment
(Click here to go to the assessment form)**

- Is your online application process accessible, and can individuals with disabilities easily access it?
- How are you integrating any partner agencies into your application and interview process? What are their comments about your application and interview process?
- Have the employees who manage this process at your site had access to disability awareness and etiquette training, and do they understand the goals for this program?
- Do applicants have the opportunity to self-identify as an individual with a disability at every step of the application and interview process?

SCREENING & REVIEWS

Onboarding New Hires and Training Best Practices

Onboarding and training new hires with disabilities follows the same rules as onboarding and training any new employee. Each organization approaches this slightly differently, but may include:

Onboarding New Hires

- Introduce yourself and make the person feel welcome
- Introduce new employees to other coworkers
- Help the person learn about the culture of the workplace
- Stress the importance of performance, safety and quality
- Provide pointers about informal rules such as breaks, dress code, and keep food and drink out of the work area
- Teach specific work terminology
- Check to make sure the person understands; ask them to repeat instructions
- Show the individual where things are located and review policies and procedures
- Invite the person to join you and others for breaks and lunch

Training and Ways to Improve the Experience of Work

- Ensure clear and specific job tasks
- Provide gradual introduction into the work situation, with support
- Create written, diagrammatic or pictorial instructions
- Employ a structured work pattern which enables the team member to complete one task before starting another
- Ensure clear line of management and an informed supervisor or mentor who can be available to give advice
- Create checklists and timetables for work to be done
- Provide initial close supervision
- Provide explicit rules of behavior and advice about unwritten rules in the workplace
- Strive for consistency from you and your colleagues
- Help employees to discriminate between good-natured teasing and when someone is angry or upset
- Explain expectations for jobs or routines
- Ask the person what you can do to help them, should they ask for assistance
- Give criticism and feedback privately and concretely

SCREENING & REVIEWS

On-the-Job Accommodations and Support

Once an employee with a disability comes to work for your company, there may be "accommodations" or "job supports" that need to be in place for the employee to fulfill job requirements. The Americans with Disabilities Act codified into law the legal requirement for providing these accommodations, but the real incentive is the increased value employees with disabilities provide when properly accommodated.

A reasonable accommodation is any change in the work environment (or in the way things are usually done) to help people with disabilities apply for a job, perform the duties of a job or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment.

Examples of Accommodations

- Schematics or visual tools, rather than text-based instruction
- Voice input or speech recognition aids
- Computer screen magnifiers
- Written instructions in addition to spoken instructions
- Camelbacks (water packs) for employees who easily become dehydrated due to medication
- Job coaches — individuals provided by the state or other organization to help orient and train a new employee with disabilities

As you can see from these examples, accommodations in the workplace do not need to be expensive or complicated. Let your new employees with disabilities and your agency partners guide you as to what might be beneficial in your workplace. Be creative, be flexible, and be open to new ways of doing things.

Natural supports are a process for linking individuals to existing social supports in the work environment that are either informal, from coworkers and peers, or formal, from supervisors and company-sponsored training programs.

Examples of Natural Supports

- Help employees learn informal rules that will support their success in the workplace
- Give clear feedback
- Give clear directions
- Ensure that employees know how to ask for help
- Model (demonstrate how to do tasks)
- Use silence — after providing information, give time to process and come up with questions
- Use visual supports
- Help employees know where to go and who to contact with questions or concerns
- Ensure involvement in formal/informal company activities
- Use standard processes such as standard training programs, standard mentoring or coaching programs, etc.

SCREENING & REVIEWS

Defining the Process for Receiving an Accommodation

While you will provide many accommodations before your employees with disabilities arrive on site, they also need to understand the process for requesting and obtaining any additional accommodation(s).

Best Practices In Accommodation Process

- Provide contact information for the individual(s) responsible for implementation of accommodations
- Make sure the process for requesting accommodations is clear — it should be possible to make requests orally or in writing, and a third party should be able to make such requests on behalf of the employee
- Identify the timeline for processing accommodation requests
- Identify the process for securing any funding or other support needed to accommodate a request
- Communicate often with the employee as the accommodation is being implemented
- Have an appeal process

SCREENING & REVIEWS

Employee Reviews

Since employees with disabilities are treated no differently than other employees, they will go through a regular review process in order to execute their responsibilities and develop as employees. If any of the below guidelines are in conflict with your company's/site's policies, make sure you follow the company/site guidelines.

Best Practices In Employee Reviews

- Give immediate, clear and open feedback about the standard of work done and where the employee's or candidate's current performance is in relation to standard
- Present information in forms that work best for the employee — for example, provide both written and oral feedback
- Set aside time for the employee to receive feedback and process the information presented
- Ensure that all accommodations needed in the workplace are also present during reviews
- Consider contingency plans for dealing with stressful situations and plans for contact with someone (parent, guardian, job coach) who will give support
- Depending on the individual arrangement with the site and with the employee, consider engaging a job coach in the review process, but ensure that feedback is given to the employee directly
- Be prepared for disability disclosure and a request for an accommodation

MEASURING SUCCESS

MEASURING SUCCESS

"To achieve the expansion in jobs needed to close the employment gap for people with disabilities, we must develop programs that are effective, sustainable and scalable. Measuring the success of each initiative contributes to our knowledge base and furthers our progress toward a workplace that is truly inclusive."

— Elaine Katz, Senior Vice President of Grants and Communications, Kessler Foundation

In This Chapter:

Defining success factors for each phase of implementation

Tracking progress against goals

We have talked about the ingredients it will take to make your initiative successful. Once up and running, you will want to measure your success to build further credibility around your efforts.
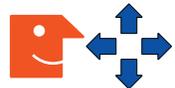
Success Factors

As you look at each critical phase of the program, consider these success factors:

PHASE	SUCCESS FACTORS
Buy-in	· One or more "project champions" passionate about starting the initiative · Clear communication of business case to fit company needs · CEO sign-off and/or support
Assessment	· Needs to involve operations and HR from senior to local level · Recruiting/hiring systems of each company must be taken into consideration early in disability employment and inclusion efforts

MEASURING SUCCESS

Success Factors (continued)

PHASE	SUCCESS FACTORS
Planning	· Internal and external momentum can grow quickly within these initiatives, so a plan must be in place to channel it · Established and efficient accommodations system in place to understand existing processes
Design	· Elements of the pilot project are created to effectively facilitate disability inclusion · Established practices and procedures defining the project framework are in place and known internally
Develop	· Internal and/or external resources are in place and committed to the vision of the project · Staff and external stakeholders understand metrics and measures of accountability
Pilot	· Clear communication and agreement of pilot site business case and need for inclusive culture · Local project champion who is willing to take ownership of implementation · Data tracking and reports are available to senior management to communicate learnings
Evaluate	· Identification of key metrics related to your company's original business case are clearly defined · Metrics are monitored and frequently communicated by a dedicated project manager · Lessons learned from pilot rollout are incorporated into plans for expansions
Pilot Expansion/ Rollout	· Broad buy-in for diversity and inclusion initiative is clearly evident among local site managers and front line staff · Clear standard operating procedure or rollout plan is articulated by project champions and understood by local managers

MEASURING SUCCESS

National Surveys to Benchmark and Measure Disability Inclusion

The US Business Leadership Network (USBLN), the National Organization on Disability (NOD) and Cornell University have created surveys that companies can participate in to benchmark and track progress across several dimensions of disability inclusion.

USBLN Disability Equality Index[SM]:

- A national, transparent benchmarking tool that offers businesses an opportunity to receive an objective score, on a scale of zero to 100, on their disability inclusion policies and practices


NOD Disability Employment Tracker™:

- A free and confidential online assessment that provides critical analysis on your company's disability employment practices, with optional assessment of veteran employment practices

Cornell University BenchmarkABILITY

- A self-assessment tool to help organizations learn more about leading practices to promote disability inclusive workplaces
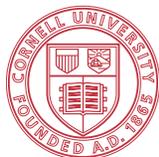
MEASURING SUCCESS

Tracking Your Success

As you track progress against your goals, you will be regularly reviewing data to learn what is working, and making any necessary refinements to your program. This chart outlines some key areas to consider when setting your goals, and tracking and reviewing progress.

	GOALS	WAYS TO LEARN AND IMPROVE
Attract	• Create high awareness and "buzz" about your company/ site among local disability community • Create a positive candidate experience	• Conduct brief annual survey of providers or third-party agencies • Conduct interviews with individuals with disabilities to understand successes, difficulties and places where improvements can be made • Engage Employee Resource Group in attracting and retaining individuals with disabilities
Hire	• Set goals of number of individuals with disabilities hired per year, or percentage of new hires to be people with disabilities each year • Achieve consistent talent pipeline from community providers	• Track new hire data • Track referrals and success rates across agencies and hiring sources • Identify those sources for hiring that have been successful to continue relationships; identify unsuccessful partnerships and work to improve
Retain	• Set retention rate for individuals with disabilities after one year	• Conduct exit interviews with separated employees • Conduct exit interviews with supporting agencies and providers where applicable
Succeed	• Achieve cost goals set by site • Meet or exceed safety, quality and productivity goals for site • Expand program to additional sites nationwide	• Track and understand data related to cost, safety and productivity • Track number of sites implementing

Tracking Contractor Model Success

For sites using the contractor model, work with the contractor to create a scorecard to track their efforts and success in bringing people with disabilities into the workforce.

+ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex, overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and starting on the first one."

Mark Twain — American Author

Definition of "Disability"
How does the federal government define "disability"?

The term "disability" is defined by the federal government in various ways, depending on the context. For the purposes of federal disability nondiscrimination laws (such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act), the definition of a person with a disability is typically defined as someone who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more "major life activities," (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. More information on federal disability nondiscrimination laws, visit DOL's Disability Nondiscrimination Law Advisor.

For purposes of Social Security disability benefits, a person with a disability must have a severe disability (or combination of disabilities) that has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months or result in death, and which prevents working at a "substantial gainful activity" level. State vocational rehabilitation (VR) offices define a person with a disability to be eligible for VR services if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a "substantial impediment" to employment for the applicant.

More information on the varying ways disability is defined and the origins of those definitions is available on DisabilityStatistics.org, a comprehensive online resource maintained by the Employment and Disability Institute at Cornell University.

A person with a disability is typically defined as someone who:

1. has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more "major life activities,"

2. has a record of such an impairment, or

3. is regarded as having such an impairment.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Implementation Timeline

Be prepared to be patient. Implementing a disability employment and inclusion program takes time. Here is a sample implementation process timeline for a pilot program leading to national rollout.

Ultimately, the length of time to reach meaningful employment levels will depend on a range of factors including site complexity, scale, and policies and procedures.

This is a full-size, printable version of the Sample Implementation Timeline that is displayed on page 19.

1. BUY-IN

Secure senior leadership agreement to move forward with assessment (resources and concept). Ideally, buy-in includes:

- Operations person with direct CEO report
- HR and Talent Acquisition

2. ASSESSMENT

Review company policies, practices, programs and procedures:

- Workplace
- Workforce
- Marketplace

Understand what needs to change

Assess size of opportunity

3. PLANNING

Develop plan to address identified gaps:

- Resources needed
- Timeline
- Targets (milestones and outcomes)
- Project lead and sponsor

Approve the plan (head of operations)

4. PILOT ROLLOUT

Select pilot sites:

- Track progress against milestones and metrics
- Execute internal communications plan

Build local partnerships for local pipelines

Translate learnings into revised rollout plan

5. SCALE ROLLOUT

Implement internal communications for broader internal rollout (including goals, expectations, timeline and marketing)

Same as pilot but execute plan for national rollout

6. STEADY STATE

Track, measure, report

Finalize ongoing structure and ownership

Implement external communications

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Types of Disabilities

This is an extensive list of disabilities employers frequently ask about. While many people often think of disabilities in terms of physical limitations — primarily due to the iconic wheelchair symbol — disabilities actually fall into two major categories. Visible disabilities are those that can be seen. An example of this would be a person using a cane. Invisible disabilities are those like diabetes, epilepsy or mental health issues that cannot be seen.

The list below is extensive, but not all-inclusive, and there are a number of organizations or websites that can be used for less common disabilities. Click on a summary below to learn more, or just continue to the next page to see the details in order.

Physical Disabilities

Examples:
Spinal Cord Injury (Paraplegia, Quadriplegia), Muscular Dystrophy, Short Stature

Learning and Attention Issues (Learning Disabilities)

Examples:
ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia, Executive Functioning Issues

Medical and Neurological Issues

Examples:
Cancer, Diabetes, Epilepsy, HIV/AIDS, Multiple Sclerosis

Vision Loss

Examples:
Low Vision, Visual Impairment, Blindness

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Examples:
Autism and Asperger's Syndrome, among many others, are included in this broad group of disabilities

Mental Health Conditions

Examples:
Anxiety Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, Depression, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Brain Injury

Examples:
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Post Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI)

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Examples:
Deaf, Deafened, Hard of Hearing or Hearing Impaired

Speech and Language

Examples:
Apraxia of Speech, Dysarthria, Stuttering

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Physical Disabilities
Examples:
Spinal Cord Injury (Paraplegia, Quadriplegia), Muscular Dystrophy, Short Stature

Spinal Cord Injury
Spinal Cord Injury describes a condition in which there has been permanent damage to the spinal cord, resulting in some degree of paralysis. Quadriplegia denotes loss of function in all four extremities, while paraplegia refers to loss of function in the lower part of the body only; in both cases the individual might have some function in the affected limbs. While people with spinal cord injuries often refer to themselves as a *para* or a *quad*, communicators should use *man with paraplegia, woman who is paralyzed* or *person with a spinal cord injury*. Do not say cripple or handicapped.

Paraplegia
Paraplegia is a lesion of the spinal cord that results in paralysis of certain areas of the body, along with the corresponding loss of sensation. The term paraplegia (para meaning two) connotes that the person is paralyzed from the waist down.

Quadriplegia
Quadriplegia refers to paralysis from approximately the shoulders down (quad meaning four describing the immobility of the four limbs). Most spinal cord injuries result in loss of sensation and function below the level of injury, including loss of controlled function of the bladder and bowel.

Muscular Dystrophy
Muscular Dystrophy refers to a group of genetic, hereditary muscle diseases that cause progressive muscle weakness. Muscular dystrophies are characterized by progressive skeletal muscle weakness, defects in muscle proteins, and the death of muscle cells and tissue.

Short Stature
Short Stature describes a variety of genetic conditions causing people to grow to less than 4'10" tall. Say *person of short stature*, although some groups prefer *little people*. *Dwarfism* is an accepted medical term, but should not be used as general terminology. Do not refer to these individuals as *midgets* or *dwarfs*.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Vision Loss
Examples:
Low Vision, Visual Impairment, Blindness

Visual Acuity
Visual Acuity is the clinical measure of the eye's ability to distinguish details of the smallest identifiable letter or symbol. This measurement is usually given in a fraction and is based upon visible print size. Typical vision is 20/20. If an individual sees 20/200, the smallest letter that this individual can see at 20 feet could be seen by someone with typical vision at 200 feet.

Vision Loss
Vision Loss refers to individuals who have trouble seeing, even when wearing glasses or contact lenses, as well as to individuals who are blind or unable to see at all.

Legally Blind
Legally Blind is a level of vision loss that has been legally defined to determine eligibility for benefits. The clinical diagnosis refers to a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the best possible correction, and/or a visual field of 20 degrees or less. Often, people who are diagnosed with legal blindness still have some usable vision.

Total Blindness
Total Blindness refers to an inability to see anything with either eye.

Color Blindness
Color Blindness is the inability to distinguish the differences between certain colors. This condition results from an absence of color-sensitive pigment in the cone cells of the retina — the nerve layer at the back of the eye. Most color vision problems are inherited and are present at birth. Approximately 1 out of 12 males and 1 out of 20 women are color blind.

Low Vision
Low Vision is a term often used interchangeably with visual impairment and refers to a loss of vision that may be severe enough to hinder an individual's ability to complete daily activities such as reading, cooking or walking outside safely, while still retaining some degree of usable vision.

Visual Impairment
Visual Impairment is often defined clinically as a visual acuity of 20/70 or worse in the better eye with best correction, or a total field loss of 140 degrees. Additional factors influencing visual impairment might be contrast sensitivity, light sensitivity, glare sensitivity and light/dark adaptation.

Functional Limitation
Functional Limitation refers to the interaction of visual functioning and ability to perform activities of daily living. Common daily activities affected by vision loss are reading, safe pedestrian travel, self-care, cooking and recreational activities.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Brain Injury

Examples:

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Post Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI)

Brain Injury or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Brain Injury or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) may happen from a blow or jolt to the head or an object penetrating the brain. When the brain is injured, the person can experience a change in consciousness that can range from becoming disoriented and confused to slipping into a coma. The person might also have a loss of memory for the time immediately before or after the event that caused the injury. Not all injuries to the head result in a TBI. It is considered incorrect to use the term *traumatic brain disorder*.

Cerebral Palsy (CP)

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is considered a neurological disorder caused by a non-progressive brain injury or malformation that occurs while the child's brain is under development. Cerebral palsy primarily affects body movement and muscle coordination. Though cerebral palsy can be defined, having cerebral palsy does not define the person that has the condition. (Cerebralpalsy.org, 2015)

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Injury (PTSD or PTSI)

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Injury (PTSD or PTSI) can occur after experiencing a traumatic event. A traumatic event is something terrifying and scary that one sees, hears about or that happens to them personally, like:

- Combat exposure
- Childhood sexual or physical abuse
- Terrorist attack
- Sexual or physical assault
- Serious accidents, like a car wreck
- Natural disasters, like a fire, tornado, hurricane, flood or earthquake

Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event. PTSI is often associated with wounded warriors, but there are many more civilians with PTSI than military personnel. PTSI can be caused by car accidents, abuse, robberies or other situations that cause great fear or danger to one's well-being.

(Note: There is a movement to remove the word "disorder" and replace with "injury" to be consistent with the above definition.)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learning and Attention Issues (Learning Disabilities)
Examples:
ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia, Executive Functioning Issues

ADHD (Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)
ADHD (Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) is a biological condition that makes it hard for many individuals to sit still and concentrate. There are various areas of the brain that control one's ability to concentrate and "hit the brakes." These areas may be less active and develop more slowly in those with ADHD. This can upset the balance of certain brain chemicals. It can also explain why some may have more trouble socially than their peers. A person does not outgrow ADHD. The symptoms may change over time, but ADHD is a lifelong condition.

Dyslexia
Dyslexia is a brain-based condition. It causes difficulty with reading, spelling, writing and sometimes speaking. In people with dyslexia, the brain has trouble recognizing or processing certain types of information. This can include matching letter sounds and symbols (such as the letter b making the buh sound) and blending them together to make words. Some people with dyslexia do not have trouble sounding out words, but they may struggle to understand what they read. It can be very hard for people with dyslexia to read in a way that is automatic, or seemingly without effort.

Dyscalculia
Dyscalculia is a brain-based condition that makes it hard to make sense of numbers and math concepts. People with dyscalculia can't grasp basic number concepts. They work hard to learn and memorize basic number facts. They may know what to do in math class, but do not understand why they're doing it. In other words, they miss the logic behind it.

Dysgraphia
Dysgraphia is the term used to describe a wide range of writing challenges, but is often used to refer to handwriting issues such as letter or word formation and other technical aspects of writing.

Executive Functioning Issues
Executive Functions consist of several mental skills that help the brain organize and act on information. These skills enable people to plan, organize, remember things, prioritize, pay attention and get started on tasks. They also help people use information and experiences from the past to solve current problems.

Source: Understood.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
Examples:
Autism and Asperger's Syndrome, among many others, are included in this broad group of disabilities

Intellectual Disability

Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem-solving) and in adaptive behavior, which covers a range of everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.

Developmental Disability

Developmental disabilities is an umbrella term that includes intellectual disability but also includes other disabilities that are apparent during childhood. Developmental disabilities are severe chronic disabilities that can be cognitive or physical or both. The disabilities appear before the age of 22 and are likely to be lifelong. Some developmental disabilities are largely physical issues, such as cerebral palsy or epilepsy. Some individuals may have a condition that includes a physical and intellectual disability, for example, Down syndrome or fetal alcohol syndrome.

Intellectual disability encompasses the "cognitive" part of this definition, that is, a disability that is broadly related to thought processes. Because intellectual and other developmental disabilities often co-occur, intellectual disability professionals often work with people who have both types of disabilities.

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) refers to a group of complex disorders of brain development that may cause difficulty with social interactions, problems with verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviors. In terms of symptoms, Asperger's syndrome is on the milder end of the spectrum. People with ASD can have severe limitations in one area with no limitations in others. Use *child with autism* or *Asperger's syndrome* or *person on the spectrum* when referencing individuals with these types of disorders.

Down Syndrome

Down syndrome occurs when an individual has a full or partial extra copy of chromosome 21. This additional genetic material alters the course of development and causes the characteristics associated with Down syndrome. A few of the common physical traits of Down syndrome are low muscle tone, small stature, an upward slant to the eyes, and a single deep crease across the center of the palm — although each person with Down syndrome is a unique individual and may possess these characteristics to different degrees, or not at all.

Sources: American Association on Intellectual and Development Disabilities, www.aaidd.org; National Down Syndrome Society, www.ndss.org; Autism Speaks, www.autismspeaks.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Deaf/Hard of Hearing
Examples:
Deaf, Deafened, Hard of Hearing or Hearing Impaired

Deaf
Deaf usually refers to a hearing loss so severe that there is very little or no functional hearing. "Hard of hearing" refers to a hearing loss where there may be enough residual hearing that an auditory device, such as a hearing aid or FM system, provides adequate assistance to process speech.

Deafened
Deafened usually refers to a person who becomes deaf as an adult and, therefore, faces different challenges than those of a person who were born deaf or became deaf as a child.

Hearing Impaired
Hearing impaired is often used to describe people with any degree of hearing loss, from mild to profound, including those who are deaf and those who are hard of hearing. Many individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing prefer the terms *deaf* and *hard of hearing*, because they consider them to be more positive than the term *hearing impaired*, which implies a deficit or that something is wrong that makes a person less than whole.

Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing individuals may choose to use hearing aids, cochlear implants and/or other assistive listening devices to boost available hearing. Alternatively, or in addition, they may read lips, use sign language, sign language interpreters and/or captioning.

Source: University of Washington, http://www.washington.edu/doit/how-are-terms-deaf-deafened-hard-hearing-and-hearing-impaired-typically-used

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Medical and Neurological Issues
Examples:
Cancer, Diabetes, Epilepsy, HIV/AIDS, Multiple Sclerosis

Cancer
In all types of cancer, some of the body's cells begin to divide without stopping and spread into surrounding tissues. Cancer can start almost anywhere in the human body. Normally, human cells grow and divide to form new cells as needed. When cells grow old or become damaged, they die, and new cells take their place. When cancer develops, however, this orderly process breaks down. As cells become more and more abnormal, old or damaged cells survive when they should die, and new cells form when they are not needed. These extra cells can divide without stopping and may form growths called tumors.

Diabetes
When a person eats, the body turns food into sugars, or glucose. At that point, the pancreas is supposed to release insulin. Insulin serves as a "key" to open your cells and allow the glucose to enter, turning the glucose into energy. But with diabetes, this system does not work.

Epilepsy
Epilepsy is defined as recurrent and unprovoked seizures. Although the symptoms of a seizure may affect any part of the body, the electrical events that produce the symptoms occur in the brain. The location of that event, how it spreads, how much of the brain is affected and how long it lasts all have profound effects. These factors determine the character of a seizure and its impact on the individual.

HIV/AIDS
HIV/AIDS is a disease of the immune system. HIV is a lot like other viruses, including those that cause the "flu" or the common cold. But there is an important difference — over time, the immune system can clear most viruses out of the body. That isn't the case with HIV — the human immune system can't seem to get rid of it. That means that once a person has HIV, they have it for life.

AIDS is the final stage of HIV infection, and not everyone who has HIV advances to this stage. People at this stage of HIV disease have badly damaged immune systems, which put them at risk for opportunistic infections (OIs). A person is considered to have progressed to AIDS if they have one or more specific OIs, certain cancers or a very low number of CD4 cells.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
Multiple sclerosis (MS) involves an immune-mediated process in which an abnormal response of the body's immune system is directed against the central nervous system (CNS), which is made up of the brain, spinal cord and optic nerves. The exact antigen — or target that the immune cells are sensitized to attack — remains unknown, which is why MS is considered by many experts to be "immune-mediated" rather than "autoimmune."

Sources: The National Cancer Institute, www.cancer.gov; The Epilepsy Foundation, www.epilepsy. com; Aids.gov, www.aids.gov; Diabetes Research Institute, www.diabetesresearch.org, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, www.nationalmssociety.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Mental Health Conditions
Examples:
Anxiety Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, Depression, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

A mental health condition is not the result of one event. Research suggests multiple, interlinking causes. Genetics, environment and lifestyle combine to influence whether someone develops a mental health condition. A stressful job or home life makes some people more susceptible, as do traumatic life events like being the victim of a crime. Biochemical processes and circuits as well as basic brain structure may play a role as well.

Anxiety Disorder
Anxiety disorder is the most common mental health concern in the United States. An estimated 40 million adults in the U.S., or 18%, have an anxiety disorder. Approximately 8% of children and teenagers experience the negative impact of an anxiety disorder at school and at home. Most people develop symptoms of anxiety disorders before age 21, and women are 60% more likely to be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder than men. Symptoms can range from a feeling of apprehension and dread, to heart palpitations, restlessness or irritability.

Bipolar Disorder
Bipolar disorder is a chronic mental illness that causes dramatic shifts in a person's mood, energy and ability to think clearly. People with bipolar have high and low moods, known as mania and depression, which differ from the typical ups and downs most people experience. If left untreated, the symptoms usually get worse. However, with a strong lifestyle that includes self-management and a good treatment plan, many people live well with the condition.

Depression
Like with any mental health condition, people with depression or who are going through a depressive episode (also known as major or clinical depression) experience symptoms differently. But for most people, depression changes how they function day-to-day. Often there is an overwhelming feeling of sadness and hopelessness that can impact sleep, eating, work functions and social activity.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) is characterized by repetitive, unwanted, intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and irrational, excessive urges to do certain actions (compulsions). Although people with OCD may know that their thoughts and behavior do not make sense, they are often unable to stop them. Symptoms typically begin during childhood, the teenage years or young adulthood, although males often develop them at a younger age than females. More than 2% of the U.S. population (nearly 1 out of 40 people) will be diagnosed with OCD during their lives.

Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness, www.nami.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Speech and Language

Examples:

Apraxia of Speech, Dysarthria, Stuttering

Apraxia

Apraxia is a motor speech disorder. The messages from the brain to the mouth are disrupted, and the person cannot move his or her lips or tongue to the right place to say sounds correctly, even though the muscles are not weak.

Dysarthria (Neurological Motor Speech Impairment)

Dysarthria is a neurological motor speech impairment characterized by slow, weak, uncoordinated movements of the speech musculature. It results in reduced speech intelligibility and reduced ability to function in communication situations, which can lead to social isolation and depression. Dysarthria can be congenital (e.g., cerebral palsy) or acquired (e.g., Parkinson's disease, brain injury, stroke).

Stuttering

Stuttering affects the fluency of speech. It begins during childhood and, in some cases, lasts throughout life. The disorder is characterized by disruptions in the production of speech sounds, also called "disfluencies." Most people produce brief disfluencies from time to time. For instance, some words are repeated and others are preceded by "um" or "uh."

Source: American Speech Language & Hearing Association, www.asha.org
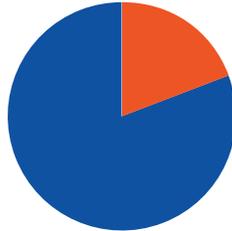
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
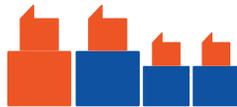
Overview of the Disability Community

The approximate number of people with disabilities in the United States:

56 MILLION [1]

No diversity group is excluded from disability and it is the only minority group that you can join:

That is

19% [1]

of the U.S. population

The approximate percentage of U.S. families that have at least **one member** with a disability:

30% [2]

The approximate percentage of U.S. families that have at least **one child** with a disability:

10% [2]

It is estimated that

30% [1]

of veterans have a disability

$220 BILLION [3]

People with disabilities in the United States have an annual discretionary spending power of $220 billion, which does not take into account family, friends and supporters

A significant portion of a company's existing workforce will experience a disability during their employment
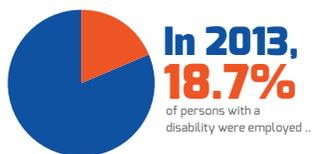
20% [4] MID-FORTIES +

of workers will experience a disability lasting one or more years during their professional lives, and the rate accelerates when employees pass their mid-forties
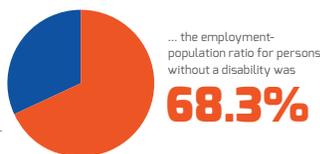
Type of disabilities

Physical Disabilities

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Medical & Neurological Issues

Vision Loss

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Mental Health Conditions

Brain Injury

Learning and Attention Issues (Learning Disabilities)

Speech and Language

With the Baby Boomer generation retiring, people with disabilities are the largest untapped labor source, and their unemployment rate is high relative to the broader population

In 2013, **18.7%** of persons with a disability were employed ...

... the employment-population ratio for persons without a disability was

68.3%

Hiring people with disabilities leads to

Large labor pool
Lower turnover
Reduced recruiting costs
Fewer absences
Good performance
Good safety record
No impact on medical & insurance costs
Positive diversity impact

[1] Source: US Census Bureau; [2] Source: US Census Data; [3] Source: Diversity, Inc.;
[4] Source: Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 2006. Society of Actuaries
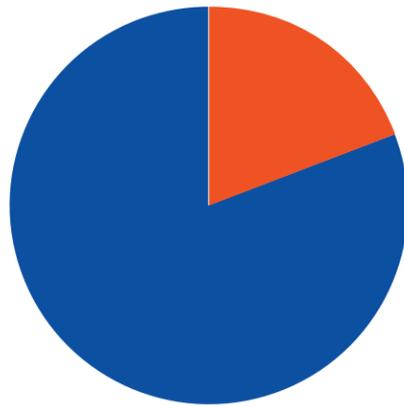
See full-size 11" x 17" printable poster on next page.

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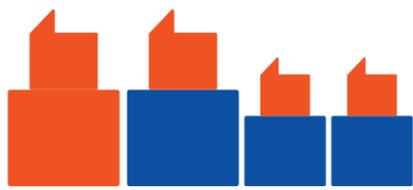
56 MILLION [1]

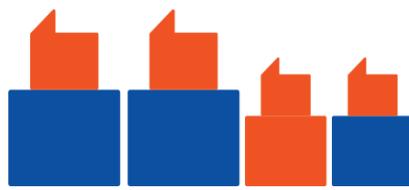No diversity group is excluded from disability and it is the only minority group that you can join:

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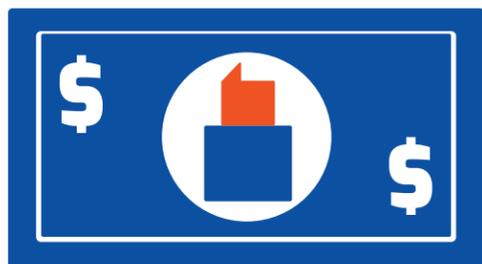The approximate percentage of U.S. families that have at least **one member** with a disability:

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[1] Source: US Census Bureau; [2] Source: US Census Data; [3] Source: Diversity, Inc.;
[4] Source: Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 2006. Society of Actuaries

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Disability Inclusion Toolkit

This toolkit contains forms, sample templates and sample agreements to assist you and your organization with the disability employment and inclusion process. Browse through the toolkit page-by-page or use the navigation below to go directly to each tool.

Environmental and Job Analysis

Application and Interview Process Assessment

Sample Agency Agreement

Facility Checklist

Sample Project Plan

Sample Confidentiality Agreement

Items to Assess When Reviewing Service Providers

Sample Workplace Analysis Form

Click on the toolbox icon to get back to this page.

Sample Agency Questionnaire

Sample Needs Self-Assessment Form

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Environmental and Job Analysis

DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RESOURCE GOALS

How many people do you hire per year and what types of people do you look for?

How do you recruit and who are your recruiting partners?

What are your diversity goals in terms of hiring numbers, training and inclusion?

Where do you see the disability employment and inclusion project having the biggest impact in terms of your diversity and HR goals?

EMPLOYEE RETENTION AND SUPPORT HISTORY

What are your key strategies related to employee retention?

Have you made any reasonable accommodations in the past?

☐ Yes　　☐ No

If so, what were the supports and related performance concerns?

How do you support employees who may be struggling?

INCENTIVE PLANNING

Do you tap into federal/state/local economic and workforce development incentives?

☐ Yes　　☐ No

Do you pursue job training or other types of grants?

☐ Yes　　☐ No

Do you collect Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)?

☐ Yes　　☐ No

How would the potential incentives you secure through your disability employment and inclusion efforts be most impactful?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Facility Checklist

Are there designated parking spaces for persons with disabilities that are close to the entrance of the worksite?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Is there a pathway without abrupt level changes or steps that leads from the parking area to the entrance?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If ramps are used to provide access, are they appropriately graded and are handrails provided?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are the doors wide enough (36 inches) for people using wheelchairs?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are they easy to open (e.g., not excessively heavy, with easily grasped handles, or automatic)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the HR office in an accessible location?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are pathways to the bathroom, water fountain, and public telephone accessible?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Can people with disabilities use them?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are elevators accessible to all people with disabilities (e.g., control panels lower than 54 inches from the floor, raised symbols or numbers on the control panels)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Is signage appropriate and accessible for people with visual, learning and cognitive disabilities (including the use of symbols and graphics)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Does the emergency warning system include both audio and visual alarms?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Notes:

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Items to Assess When Reviewing Service Providers

(PAGE 1 OF 2)

MISSION/VISION

What is the agency hoping to achieve? Some agencies are about family support, work, or community projects. You will want to be sure that you understand the mission and focus of each agency.

Does the agency define success the same way your company does?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Do they recognize the same performance standards?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

WORK OR WORK READINESS TRAINING

The goal of an agency's work readiness training should be integrated employment (work in the community). The disability employment and inclusion program is about hiring people to work at your facilities alongside other employees.

PLACEMENTS

How many individuals with disabilities were placed in competitive work last year?

Do they have the capacity to meet your company's hiring needs for this year?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

PART-TIME/FULL-TIME

Does the agency make part-time and full-time placements (note – many agencies only do part-time employment)?

TENURE

What is the average tenure rate for each placement?

TRAINING

What type of training does the agency offer employers (e.g., disability awareness and sensitivity, working with job coaches, etc.)?

BUSINESS SERVICES

Obtain a list of services offered to employers beyond training. Determine whether they will help with disability accommodation assessments for employees who are not "their" clients.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Items to Assess When Reviewing Service Providers

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Are they able and willing to provide project support to ensure effective implementation of your hiring initiative?

☐ Yes ☐ No

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Does/will the agency work with others in the community to fulfill your hiring needs? Many agencies can be "turf-focused," so this is an important item to test.

☐ Yes ☐ No

ON-THE-JOB SUPPORTS

Does the agency offer to send a support person (typically called a "job coach") to help people with disabilities who may need a little extra help the first few days of acclimating to a new job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How long can that support continue if needed?

[ ]

If the employee starts to struggle later on (3, 6, 15 months into employment), can the agency send someone to help?

☐ Yes ☐ No

EMPLOYER REFERENCES

What other companies have worked with the agency to help them meet their staffing needs?

[ ]

Get letters of reference from those companies, or call and ask questions about the agency's ability to meet business needs.

☐ Completed

RELATIONSHIP WITH STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

How does the agency relate to state and local VR services?

[ ]

Notes:

[ ]

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Agency Questionnaire
(PAGE 1 OF 2)

BACKGROUND

1. Agency Name: _____

   Website Address: _____

   Contact Person: _____

2. Describe your agency's mission and vision.

   _____

3. Describe how the agency is funded (e.g., private vs. public).

   _____

4. Does your organization have a disability employment and inclusion expert on staff (e.g., business liaison, business relationship manager) that works directly with employers?

   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

WORK OR WORK READINESS TRAINING

5. How is your agency responding to the new 503 Regulations to better serve employers?

   _____

6. How often does your agency meet with employers (e.g., weekly, monthly, quarterly)?

   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

   Briefly describe the purpose and agenda of these meetings.

   _____

7. How many employers are you currently working with in your community?

   _____

8. Describe the types of services you offer employers (training, job coaching, program development, etc.).

   _____

9. Describe the types of services you provide people with disabilities.

   _____

10. What is the average wage, hourly rate or annual salary of individuals placed?

    _____

PLACEMENTS

11. How many people do you place in jobs per year?

    _____

12. How many clients do you currently serve?

    _____

13. What is the average tenure per placement?

    _____

14. How do you screen and assess candidates?

    _____

15. What is the average timeline for filling a job request?

    _____

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Agency Questionnaire

16. Please describe how your agency works with other disability organizations in your community (e.g., competitor or collaborator).

17. Is your agency comfortable reaching out to other disability organizations if your agency is not able to provide an adequate pipeline? (For example — employer X needs 50 new employees and you only have 10 that are job ready — what do you do?)

18. Describe your agency's relationship with VR, Developmental Disabilities agencies and the local one stops?

19. Are you willing and able to assign a staff member to work directly with a local employer?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

20. Can you provide a list of business references?

Notes:

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Application and Interview Process Assessment

Is your online application process easily accessible for individuals with disabilities?

☐ Yes　　☐ No

If you are working with partner agencies, how are you integrating them into your application and interview process? What are their comments about your application and interview process?

Have the employees who manage this process at your site had access to disability awareness and etiquette training, and do they understand the goals of this program?

Do you allow a job coach or guardian to assist with the application process?

☐ Yes　　☐ No

Can they be at the interview for support?

☐ Yes　　☐ No

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Project Plan*

DISABILITY AND INCLUSION PROJECT PLAN	START	END	STATUS
Initial Strategy and Planning Session			
Align internally on vision and scope of disability employment and inclusion initiative	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed
Meet with external partners to craft an initial strategy within pilot sites	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed
Local/Site-Specific Engagement of Providers			
Engage in outreach to local service providers and local VR offices to communicate intention	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed
Choose a lead service provider for candidate sourcing and secure local VR participation	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed
Establish Candidate Pipeline with Partners			
Define criteria and distribute job descriptions to all potential candidate sourcing partners	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed
Document pipeline and training process of new hires	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed
Branding and Communications			
Select a name and brand for your company's disability employment and inclusion initiative	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed
Design and approve logo with the intention of internal and external distribution	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed
Delegate responsibility for internal dissemination of communications related to the initiative	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed
Assessment and Job Analysis			
Define scope of job analysis (key positions throughout business lines)	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed
Conduct job analysis internally or through an external disability and inclusion consultant partner	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed
Training and Internal Communications			
Conduct disability and inclusion 101 trainings with project managers and key management staff	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed
Provide on-the-job support for new hires in addition to creating natural supports	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed
Conduct disability and inclusion trainings with frontline staff and executive team	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed
Evaluation of Pilot Sites			
Establish ongoing metrics measurement of site performance based on business need and value	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed
Collect lessons learned from pilot site(s) and update strategy accordingly	__/__/__	__/__/__	☐ Completed

*Please note this is a sample only; NOT a comprehensive plan

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Workplace Analysis Form

(PAGE 1 OF 5)

Analyst: _____   Date: _____

Company name: _____   Industry: _____

Address: _____   City: _____

Contact Name: _____   Contact phone: _____

Contact Email: _____   Contact fax: _____

Job Title/Position:

Hours: _____   Wage rate: _____   Department: _____

Job description available: _____   Job description to be written: _____

Technical skills required:

_____

Personal skills required:

_____

Benefits:

_____

What is the application process (online, at facility, through an agency, other)? _____

What is the interview process? _____

Schedule of performance review: _____

Immediate Supervisor: _____

Hierarchy of leadership in this department:

Name: _____   Title: _____

Name: _____   Title: _____

Name: _____   Title: _____

HR manager: _____

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Workplace Analysis Form

Payroll leader:

Assigned work area: Additional access:

Lighting:

Organization of work area:

Organization of the Workplace

Quiet space:

Tidiness:

Systematically arranged:

Stationary/Mobile:

Position of furniture:

Same/Different workers in the environments:

Issues with personal space:

Other:

How are company social events (birthday rituals, team events, company-sponsored events) organized? What are the employee responsibilities, protocols and/or rules?

Company's history on making accommodations for employees:

Describe management style, schedules, availability:

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Workplace Analysis Form
(PAGE 3 OF 5)

How are formal evaluations structured?

Describe lighting:

Describe noise level:

Describe activity in common areas:

Describe wall/ceiling/windows (e.g., color, drop ceiling, many pictures, high/low ceilings, tinted windows):

Describe internal/external repetitive noises/vibrations:

Describe ventilation:

Describe smoking areas:

How is humor used in the environment?

How has the environment changed over time (updating/reconstruction)?

New Hire orientation location if different from work area:

Orientation structure: Length: Medium used:

Pre-test: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Post-test: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Who delivers the orientation (position/title)?

Location where orientation is held:

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Workplace Analysis Form

New employee requirements:

Employee non-work areas:

☐ Locker room:

☐ Break room:

☐ Cafeteria:

☐ Vending machines:

☐ Furniture:

☐ Washroom:

☐ TV/Appliances:

☐ Assigned space:

☐ Personal space:

☐ Noise level:

☐ Employee responsibilities:

☐ Other:

How are breaks and lunches taken (pre-assigned, routine, as production dictates)?

How is time managed within the environment (e.g., time clock, clocks [digital/analog], self-managed, non-verbal, verbal)?

Symbols/Safety:
How is safety displayed throughout the workplace (e.g., bathroom symbols, safety kits, painted walk areas, emergency push bars, etc.)?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Workplace Analysis Form
(PAGE 5 OF 5)

Communication Style:

Daily workplace: ☐ verbal ☐ verbal/written ☐ email ☐ written

Company information: ☐ verbal ☐ verbal/written ☐ email ☐ written

What are the natural occurring greetings in the workplace?

Describe how employees generally receive feedback, get new information, get answers:

Turnover rate:

How are people trained for this job?

How are employees recognized for accomplishments?

Notes:

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Needs Self-Assessment Form
(PAGE 1 OF 2)

1. COMPANY GOALS:

What are your overall goals for the company in terms of profit, production and value demonstration? How do you think a disability employment and inclusion project fits into these goals?

2. DIVERSITY/HUMAN RESOURCE GOALS:

How many people do you hire per year? What type of people do you look for? What are your diversity goals in terms of hiring numbers, training and inclusion? How do you recruit? Who are your recruiting partners? How do you want to improve recruiting/diversity? Where do you see the disability employment and inclusion project having the biggest impact in terms of your diversity/HR goals?

3. EMPLOYEE RETENTION/SUPPORT HISTORY:

What are your key strategies related to employee retention? How do you support employees who may be struggling? Have you made any reasonable accommodations in the past? If so, what were the supports and related performance concerns?

4. MARKETING/PUBLIC RELATIONS GOALS:

What is your public relations focus? Do you have specific "marketing niche" areas? Is the disability community a possible marketing target? How does a disability outreach fit into your brand image?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Needs Self-Assessment Form
(PAGE 2 OF 2)

5. INCENTIVE PLANNING:

Do you regularly tap into federal/state/local economic and workforce development incentives? Do you pursue job training or other type of grants? Do you collect the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)? How would the potential incentives you secure through your disability employment and inclusion efforts be most impactful?

6. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION GOALS:

Summarize your overall affirmative action goals. How do you see the disability employment and inclusion initiative fitting into your overall affirmative action efforts?

7. OBJECTIVES OF A DISABILITY-FOCUSED OUTREACH:

List specific objectives you would like to see related to your disability employment and inclusion efforts. What do you see as the overriding goal of these efforts?

Other Comments:

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Agency Agreement
(PAGE 1 OF 3)

*Sample only: please check with Legal Department before using at your site

Employees with Disabilities Initiative

This Agreement entered into this _____ day of _____, 20_____, by and between the _____ (hereinafter referred to as "_____") and _____Co. (hereinafter referred to as "_____").

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, the parties to this Agreement understand that the training at _____and the opportunity to obtain practical _____experience is for the benefit of the trainees; the trainees will work under close personal supervision and are not displacing regular employees; _____s is receiving no immediate advantage from the training and, occasionally, _____s' operation may be less efficient; the trainees' training with _____s will end upon the conclusion of their participation in the _____ program; the trainees are not entitled to a job at the conclusion of the training period; and all parties, including _____, _____s, and the trainees, understand that the trainees and _____ management are not _____s' employees for any purpose and are not entitled to wages and/or benefits for the time spent in training.

WHEREAS, _____ and _____s agree that there shall be no monetary consideration paid by either party to the other, it being acknowledged that the program provided hereunder is mutually beneficial. The parties shall cooperate in administering this program in a manner which will tend to maximize the mutual benefits provided to _____ and _____s.

WHEREAS, _____ and _____s acknowledge an obligation to contribute to the training of the trainees; and

WHEREAS, it is to the benefit of both parties that trainees have practical training opportunities; and

WHEREAS, it is a fundamental responsibility of both _____ and _____s to maintain a cooperative relationship with a mutual obligation of enriching training and providing quality customer service; and

WHEREAS, both parties desire to reach an agreement for their separate and mutual responsibility:

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Confidentiality Agreement

THEREFORE, in consideration of their mutual interest, the parties hereby agree:

1. _____:
    a. Is primarily responsible for its trainees' learning experiences and will provide its management sufficient support to effectively implement the _____ employees with disabilities.
    b. Will provide its trainees with objective guidelines and a telephone number to the supervisors working with the _____ employees with disabilities.
    c. Will ensure that its trainees and management become familiar with and adhere to _____s' standards, procedures, and code of ethics prior to the beginning of their practical assignment.
    d. Will instruct all of its trainees assigned to _____s with regard to compliance with all of its rules, regulations, policies and procedures, including but not limited to those relating to the confidentiality of patient records and information and to the responsibility and authority of _____s personnel over patient care and administration. _____ shall instruct all of its trainees that proper attire must be worn at all times in the store.
    e. Will furnish _____s with a schedule of dates and hours for practical experience, as well as a list of names and telephone numbers of participating trainees and management.
    f. Will meet with designated _____s personnel for discussions and evaluation of the _____ employees with disabilities.
    g. Will ensure that its trainees, employees and management are covered by liability insurance through _____ as further described in paragraph four herein.

2. _____s will:
    h. Maintain the standards, which make it eligible for approval as a practical environment for trainee instruction.
    i. Permit trainees to use its _____ store facilities for trainee learning experiences.
    j. Monitor the trainee activities. Trainees will not replace staff or give service apart from its training value.
    k. Assist in orienting the trainees in providing them with a thorough understanding of the practice field.
    l. Meet with designated _____ management members of the _____ employees with disabilities as necessary to discuss and evaluate the trainee program.
    m. Provide access to medical records for training use, subject to _____s' rules regarding patients' privacy, and provide appropriate reference materials and procedures to trainees, when necessary.
    n. If, in the sole discretion of _____s, a trainee or _____ management member is detrimental or disruptive to its operation, _____s may deny the trainee or _____ management member access to its facilities.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Agency Agreement

3. _____ management and employees/trainees who become injured or ill while at _____s shall not be employees of _____s for the purposes of workers' compensation benefits, disability, or any similar payments for such injuries.

4. _____ agrees to hold harmless and indemnify _____s against any liability, claims, damages, lawsuits, including all costs and expenses incurred in defending any claim which may arise as a result of any actions or inactions of the _____ management and/or employees/trainees in this program.

    _____ agrees to obtain and maintain during the term of this Agreement a general liability policy covering said employees/trainees and its management. A certificate of insurance in the amount of $1,000,000 from the insurance carrier shall be provided to _____s upon request.

5. _____s agrees to hold harmless and indemnify _____ against any liability, claims, damages, lawsuits, including all cost and expenses incurred in defending any claim which may arise as a result of any action or inaction of _____s or its employees or agents.

    _____s agrees to obtain and maintain during the term of this Agreement a general liability policy covering _____s.

6. The parties agree that there will be no discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, citizenship status according to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status or genetic information, in any of their policies, practices or procedures.

7. This Agreement may be amended with the written mutual consent of both parties.

8. This agreement shall be effective as of _____, 20_____, and shall continue thereafter for five (5) years or until terminated by either party upon thirty (30) days' written notice of termination.

_____
Co. Representative Signature

_____
Print Name

_____
Title

_____
Market Number

_____
Date

_____
Agency Representative Signature

_____
Print Name

_____
Title

_____
Address

_____
City/State/Zip

_____
Phone Number

_____
Date

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Confidentiality Agreement

*Sample only: please check with Legal Department before using at your site

In connection with the _____s _____ employees with disabilities, and in consideration of my retention and/or continued retention by _____ and the compensation I receive for my services from _____ and such other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which I hereby acknowledge, I agree as follows:

      Confidentiality. In connection with the services provided for _____s, I understand that I may come into possession of information or materials that are confidential trade secrets or materials otherwise considered secret by _____s (the "Confidential Information"). Confidential Information includes, without limitation, business prospects, computer software, research techniques, research results, media plans, layouts, storyboards, scripts, reports and information regarding _____s' advertising, marketing and sales promotion products, services and strategies, and any other information deemed confidential, whether or not marked confidential or proprietary. I agree to maintain the Confidential Information in the utmost of confidence, to take all measures necessary to protect and not to disclose the Confidential Information except to those employees or independent contractors who execute a confidentiality agreement containing this clause, and who by virtue of their positions require this information to properly perform their functions in providing services for _____s.

      Compliance with HIPAA. I will immediately notify _____s in writing (at the Office of _____'s Chief Privacy Officer, address) and _____ if in the course of providing services to _____s I have obtained or will obtain access to individually identifiable health information ("protected health information" or "PHI") as defined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA"). Such PHI includes, without limitation, health information that identifies or could be used to identify an individual if such information relates to (a) the past, present or future physical or mental health condition of an individual; (b) the provision of health care to an individual or (c) the past, present or future payment for the provision of health care to an individual.

I acknowledge and agree that I will be subject to the terms and conditions of any Business Associates Agreement entered into by and between _____s and _____ pertaining to PHI.

Independent Contractor Status. I understand and agree that I have been hired and retained by _____, not _____s, and that _____s will have no responsibility for payment or withholding of taxes based on my income. I further understand and agree that under no circumstances will I be considered to be or treated as a _____s employee. My intention, and that of _____s, is for compensation for the services rendered in connection with the _____s _____ employees with disabilities to be paid to me by _____. As such, any future reclassification of _____ or me from independent contractor to employee status by a taxing authority will not confer upon me eligibility for any _____s benefits.

SIGNED this _____ day of _____, 20____

By: _____
     SIGNATURE

Name: _____
     PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

Agency: _____
     PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

Please submit one signed page of this agreement per agency staff that will have access to _____s _____ Materials and/or spend time in a _____s store as an agency representative

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

FAQs for Hiring Managers and Employees
(PAGE 1 OF 4)

Q: Why would a business hire a person with a disability?

A: Companies should hire the most qualified candidates to meet the job requirements and business needs of the position they are seeking to fill. Although people with disabilities are sometimes assumed to perform at a lower quality than those without disabilities, this has repeatedly proved inaccurate. In fact, people with disabilities have been shown to not only help companies meet recruitment and hiring needs via the utilization of an untapped labor force, but have also been shown to perform at the same rate and/or better than their peer employees without disabilities. See below:

i. Walgreens success story

ii. Survey of manager perceptions of employees with disabilities

Q: Will people with disabilities be able to keep up with our work requirements and safety standards?

A: Yes; it is expected that all employees are able to achieve and maintain performance requirements and safety standards. Successful hiring initiatives targeted at recruiting employees with disabilities are built on high expectations and a belief in the value of people with disabilities in the workforce based on demonstrated success. They do not sacrifice productivity or quality of services for candidates or applicants that do not meet required performance standards. Businesses hire people with disabilities to fill positions with loyal, productive and successful employees. In short, the employment of people with disabilities has nothing to do charity — it is a business investment.

Q: Will a person with a disability need more training to get up to speed on the job?

A: Everyone has a different learning style; while some employees may get up to speed very quickly, others may require a little more guidance and structure that is suited to their learning styles. To assist employees who may need more training (and not overburden) [COMPANY NAME] team leads or coworkers, the agencies we have partnered with will provide dedicated job coaching. The job coaching is a temporary role that will fade out as employees get up to speed on the job.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

FAQs for Hiring Managers and Employees
(PAGE 2 OF 4)

Q: Is it expensive to provide accommodations for people with disabilities?

A: Most situations lead to job accommodations that are largely inexpensive. According to the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), the accommodation cost reported by businesses show that:

i.   20% of accommodations cost nothing at all

ii.   50% of the accommodations cost less than $500

iii. 80% cost less than $1,000

Although accommodations are specific to the needs of each individual and the job requirement, JAN has reported that only 9% of accommodations cost between $2,000 and $5,000 with only 3% costing more than $5,000.

(Source: U.S. Department of Labor)

Q: Are there tax credits available for employers that hire people with disabilities?

A: Yes, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (aka WOTC) provides employers with a tax credit up to 40% of the first $6,000 of first-year wages of a new employee that identifies as a person with a disability. Newly hired employees that identify as a person with a disability must be certified as a people with disabilities by the appropriate government agencies. The credit is available after the person has worked more than 120 hours or 90 days.

i.   Note: Employers can sometimes use nonprofit partners to create processes for the identification and submission of employer tax credit claims via Form 5885. Work Opportunity Credit (PDF)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

FAQs for Hiring Managers and Employees
(PAGE 3 OF 4)

Q: I have never worked with someone with a disability before. How will it be different?

A: People with disabilities are just like anyone else. And in many cases you will not even be aware of a person's disability, as 95% of disabilities are not visible.

Q: I have heard that some organizations hire people with disabilities and pay them less; is this the [COMPANY NAME] approach?

A: No. [COMPANY NAME] pays all employees a competitive wage. The individuals with disabilities that we will hire will make the same wages and have benefits as their coworkers.

Q: What about accommodations that are more expensive than the average accommodation?

A: For small businesses (those making a maximum of $1 million in revenue or that have 30 or fewer full-time employees, including subcontractors), there is a tax credit to cover 50% of expenditures over $250 and not exceeding $10,250.

Q: What is Section 503, and how does it relate to compliance?

A: Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, requires employers with federal contracts or subcontracts that exceed $10,000, and contracts or subcontracts for indefinite quantities (unless the purchaser has reason to believe that the cost in any one year will not exceed $10,000), to take affirmative steps to hire, retain and promote qualified individuals with disabilities. The regulations implementing Section 503 make clear that this obligation to take affirmative steps includes the duty to refrain from discrimination in employment against qualified individuals with disabilities.

More information from the U.S. Department of Labor

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

FAQs for Hiring Managers and Employees
(PAGE 4 OF 4)

Q: What should I know before interviewing a candidate with a disability?

A: Be proactive in allowing the candidate to provide you with any information they feel relevant. In general, best practice is to make sure all candidates, regardless of perceived disability status, have the opportunity to inform a hiring manager or interviewer of any accommodations they may need during an interview. For more specific information on best practices and learnings in regards to interviewing jobseekers with disabilities, see: Disability Solutions - The Positive Interviewing Strategy presentation.

Q: Can an employer legally ask a candidate or employee about their disability?

A: As a result of federal regulations (Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act), employers are now encouraged to invite candidates to disclose a disability before and after a job offer has been made or accepted. Employers can invite potential and current employees to self-identify that they are a person with a disability by clearly informing them that they are welcome to do so on application materials, during the interview process, or through surveys and questionnaires after an offer has been made or an employee has started work.

Self-identification is completely voluntary, and it's important to note that inviting potential or current employees to self-identify does not conflict with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Simply put, Section 503 encourages employers to invite potential or current employees to disclose the existence of a disability while the ADA prohibits employers from asking candidates direct questions in regards to the existence of a disability before making a job offer (i.e., the pre-offer period). Click here to learn more.

Q: Why should current employees take part in disability etiquette or training workshops?

A: Current employees may have questions or misperceptions about people with disabilities or about a company's reasons for targeting the disability community as a recruitment source. These questions may go unanswered due to employee concerns about appearing uninformed or offending their new coworkers. It's important to not only give current employees the space to talk openly about their concerns, but to also learn basic disability etiquette. Additionally, the more confident and comfortable employees feel about their company's hiring initiative, the better the experience will be for new hires that will benefit from entering a workforce in which inclusion is a core value.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Employer/Service Provider Roles and Responsibilities
(PAGE 1 OF 4)

Objective
- Establish a clear definition of roles and responsibilities for each partner in order to effectively accomplish program objectives.
- Create an understanding of project requirements, work activities and tasks. In addition, defining roles and responsibilities will create a sense of purpose and ownership, and set clear expectations.

Partnership Understanding
- Employer has established a commitment to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities in their X location. This location is prepared to begin hiring people with disabilities (insert date). Preliminary hiring targets have been established at X% of all new hires for [insert date].
- The service provider will assist the employer in finding qualified applicants with disabilities. The service provider will ensure candidates are prepared for the interview and job requirements. In addition, the service provider will work with similar agencies in the community to ensure the hiring needs of the employer are met.
- Employer and service provider have entered into a partnership to develop a program for hiring people with disabilities (which leverages best practices from the X location or industry, and other innovations in the field).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Employer/Service Provider Roles and Responsibilities
(PAGE 2 OF 4)

Employer Roles and Responsibilities

Employer role is to create an effective program that will increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

1. **Program Development:** Design and develop employment practices (e.g., hiring, training, accommodations processes, etc.) that will create an environment of inclusion for people with disabilities

2. **Goal Setting:** Establish and communicate clear and measurable hiring and retention targets.

3. **Training:** Identify training needs (e.g., managers, staff, trainers, etc.) and establish a training schedule to ensure staff are trained and informed in a timely manner on disability employment and inclusion best practices to enable them to accomplish identified goals.

4. **Reporting:** Provide monthly HR reports (e.g., hires, terminations, production, etc.) that will provide quantitative data for measuring program efficacy.

5. **Communication:** Provide open and candid feedback on all aspects of the program (what's working, what's not) to all partners. Document issues/concerns as needed.

Responsibilities Include:

- Design and develop disability and inclusion program specifics (policies, training, goals, deliverables, etc.).

- Develop internal processes that ensure effective management of disability employment and inclusion initiatives — day to day management, job performance, training, staff support, etc.

- Identify internal points of contact to serve as champions for the disability employment and inclusion program (train and prepare champions for role).

- Work directly with service provider agencies to review candidate quality, job coaching needs, job coach training, performance standards, etc.

- Work directly with service provider to provide feedback, documents, metrics and reports.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Employer/Service Provider Roles and Responsibilities
(PAGE 3 OF 4)

Service Provider Roles and Responsibilities

1. **Recruitment:** Service provider will be primarily responsible for the recruitment of qualified, work-ready candidates for employment.

2. **Candidate Support:** Service provider will subsequently support these candidates — formally for up to X number of days, with additional support provided as needed.

3. **Provider Coordination:** Service provider will coordinate the efforts of other service providers and agencies in the community, and will maintain primary responsibility for the employer relationship throughout.

4. **Data Collection:** Service provider will collect and maintain metrics on the success of their candidates, in tandem with data collected by employer. Service provider will also assist employer in gathering information concerning specific individual success stories.

5. **Other Support Coordination:** Service provider will coordinate, within reason, the provision of other supports needed by the candidates, such as transportation, etc. Where a support is impossible to provide, service provider will seek the "next best" option in collaboration with employer and the candidate.

6. **Primary Point of Contact (POC):** Service provider will assign a primary staff person to be the primary point of contact for all issues related to any candidate referred through this process, including those referred from other agencies.

Responsibilities Include:

- Service provider will assign a project POC who will remain consistent throughout the year.
- Service provider will assign job coaches to go through employer training and orientation prior to the assignment of candidates.
- Service provider will present candidates for placement in [month/year].
- Service provider will work with other providers and agencies to create a system of collaboration.
- With support from employer, service provider will create a data collection system for business-driven metrics around these hires.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Employer/Service Provider Roles and Responsibilities
(PAGE 4 OF 4)

Ongoing Management

- Service provider will have weekly phone calls with employer to understand progress, work activities and issues/concerns.

- In the first 90 days, service provider proposes weekly site visits to ensure all activities are moving forward as planned. (Service provider and employer will review the site visit requirements after the initial 90-day period).

Issues/Concerns

- Employer will share any issues or concerns about the program directly with service provider's program director.

- Service provider will work directly with employer to rectify any issues or concerns.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The New Federal Context

In addition to the strong business case and return on investment for hiring people with disabilities, a new policy landscape makes hiring people with disabilities a national priority.

On September 24, 2013, the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) announced a Final Rule that makes changes to the regulations implementing Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Section 503 prohibits federal contractors and subcontractors from discriminating in employment against individuals with disabilities, and requires these employers to take affirmative action to recruit, hire, promote and retain these individuals. The Final Rule strengthens the affirmative action provisions of the regulations to aid contractors in their efforts to recruit, hire and improve job opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Highlights of the Final Rule include:

- Sets national 7% utilization goal for individuals with disabilities across job groups.
- For data collection, contractors must document and update comparisons for number of individuals with disabilities who apply for jobs and the number who are hired.
- Includes an invitation to self-identify/self-disclose a disability.
- Incorporates the equal opportunity clause into subcontracts.
- Records access for the OFCCP for compliance checks or focused reviews.
- Revises the definition of "disability" and nondiscrimination provisions necessitated by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

Each site will determine its own hiring goals in order to comply with Section 503. OFCCP has developed a form for federal contractors to use to invite employees or applicants to self-identify as an individual with a disability. To access the form and find additional information about the Final Rule, visit the Department of Labor OFCCP site at www.dol.gov.

Sample EOE Statements (inclusive of people with disabilities)

TD Bank:

Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE)/minorities/females/veterans/individuals with disabilities/regardless of sexual orientation/gender identity.

McKesson Corporation:

McKesson is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer — minorities/females/veterans/individuals with disabilities.
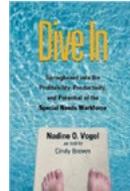
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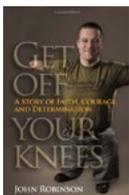
Suggested Reading

Able
by Nancy Henderson
Outlines story of Habitat/David Morris success in employing people with disabilities in competitive setting.

Dive In
by Nadine Vogel
Book about inclusive businesses, including information about Walgreens.
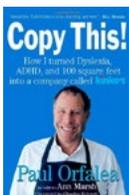
Get Off Your Knees
by John Robinson
John's life story as a person with a disability and what he learned about attitude and accomplishment.

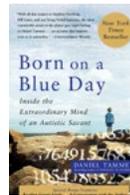### Perfectly Able
by Lighthouse International and Jim Haase
HR book about sourcing people with disabilities.

Copy This!
by Paul Orfalea
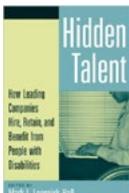Paul's story of creating Kinko's, and his dyslexia and ADHD.
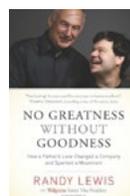
Born on a Blue Day
by Daniel Tammet
Great book to help a lay person understand what it is like to have autism.

Hidden Talent
by Mark Lengnick-Hall
Business book about inclusive business design and practice.

No Greatness Without Goodness
by Randy Lewis
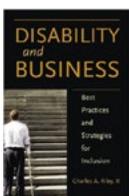The powerful story of a corporate executive who, after seeing the world through the eyes of his own child with autism, Austin, realized that we all have a greater responsibility to make the world a better place for everyone.

A Leg Up
by Josh Sundquist
Story of his life as an amputee and Olympic athlete.

Disability and Business
by Charles A Riley
Business book about inclusive business design and practice.

Any book by Dr. Temple Grandin
Temple Grandin is one of the world's most accomplished and well-known adults with autism. She has a PhD in animal science from the University of Illinois and is a professor at Colorado State University. Click here for a list of her titles on Amazon®.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Contributor Bios

Meg O'Connell

meg@globaldisabilityinclusion.com

Meg O'Connell is the President and Founder of Global Disability Inclusion, a boutique consulting firm that works with Global 500 companies and U.S. Federal Contractors to develop disability employment and inclusion programs in the workforce, the workplace and the marketplace. She is a nationally recognized disability employment and inclusion expert with over 20 years of experience. Her experience includes human capital management, talent acquisition, performance management, marketing, and customer service programs.

Prior to founding Global Disability Inclusion, Meg was Vice President at the National Organization on Disability where she developed and led their national program Bridges to Business. Bridges provided consulting services to several Fortune 1000 companies on disability employment and inclusion.

A few of Meg's key accomplishments include the development of the first of its kind data on satisfaction and engagement of employees with disabilities in the U.S. workforce, the development of a corporate assessment tool for employers to gauge the current state of their disability employment and inclusion programs, and development of a train the trainer series for one of her clients that was distributed to over 3,000 employees across the U.S.

Meg also spent ten years at the premier consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton. She was a member of the firm's People Strategy team and led several large-scale talent management projects that transformed business operations for her clients.

Also, while at Booz Allen, Meg developed and led their employee resource group for employees with disabilities, and won Booz Allen's Global Diversity Award for Individual Contributor. Booz Allen was also one of the first recipients of the New Freedom Initiative Award for the disability employment programs.

Additional accomplishments by Meg include designing and developing SunTrust Bank's customer service program for people with disabilities that won the Society of Human Resource Management's (SHRM's) Prestigious Innovative Practice Award.

She has been quoted in *Diversity Executive* magazine for her insights on employment of people with disabilities, and she key-notes and presents at national conferences regularly.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Contributor Bios (continued)

James Emmett:

jemmett@posesfamilyfoundation.org

James Emmett is a national leader in the development of employment services for people with disabilities. He was born with a physical disability and is a father to two daughters with developmental disabilities. Drawing from personal, business and educational experience, James empowers persons with disabilities to succeed in job as well as life skills, and trains corporations in outreach efforts to the disability community. James is currently the Lead Strategist for the Workplace Initiative at the Poses Family Foundation, where he oversees strategy development and implementation of projects that impact the area of disability employment and inclusion.

After earning a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, James became involved with grant-funded community-based projects in Chicago to provide employment services to people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Later he worked on national initiatives to hire hundreds of people with disabilities, many with ASD, at Walgreens distribution centers in South Carolina and Connecticut, the Best Buy distribution center in Shepherdsville, KY and Midway Moving & Storage in Chicago, IL. Also working through APSE HR Connect, James served as the lead consultant for TIAA-CREF's "Fruits of Employment" project. For the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and Industry, James hosted a video entitled, "Improving Customer Service for People with Disabilities."

James has served as the Project Director for three award-winning research/demonstration projects. These projects examined career development and transition strategies for individuals with autism and other disabilities, and included the Vocational Alliance Autism Project (VAAP), the Business Approach to Social Integration and Communication (BASIC) Grant, and the EmployAlliance Employment Within Business Project. James was the featured guest on Little City TV - CAN TV (Channel 21) in Chicago discussing autism and employment.

Deb Russell:

deb@debrussellinc.com

Deb Russell has 25 years of leadership in connecting employment and disability to create meaningful and valuable opportunities for business. Throughout her service to government, nonprofit agencies and corporate America, Deb is synonymous with innovative success. Whether creating avenues to healthcare access for newly employed people with disabilities, or charged with thought leadership and oversight of a value driven solution for Walgreens,* Deb continues to equate employees with disabilities as a way to improve companies' profits. In business and in the community, Deb is an expert in corporate disability employment and inclusion and continues to focus on ensuring that disability employment and inclusion is meaningful, valuable and sustainable. Deb is well-versed in advising companies across multiple industries, and is a seasoned strategy developer and relationship builder. She has testified before Congress and is a sought-after speaker both nationally and internationally.

Deb serves on the Board of Directors for the Judd Goldman Adaptive Sailing Program, and is past Chair of the U.S. Business Leadership Network.

*Walgreens continues to be the largest and most successful example of disability inclusion in the U.S.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Poses Family Foundation

The Poses Family Foundation (PFF) is a New York City–based philanthropic foundation founded by Nancy and Fred Poses. With interests in five areas, PFF puts its greatest focus on learning and attention issues. To create long-term, scalable impact, PFF provides strategic analysis, pro bono advising, incubation of large-scale initiatives and multi-year funding.

The Disability and Inclusion DIY Guide was created by the PFF Workplace Initiative, one of PFF's largest programs. The Workplace Initiative seeks to make disability inclusion "business as usual" by offering multi-year funding and advising support to drive scalable business-led change. Through the Workplace Initiative, PFF strives to create jobs for people with disabilities, influence disability inclusion in business, increase investment in the disability employment field, and scale tested models for advancing disability inclusion. The Workplace Initiative partners with a funder collaborative (comprised of the Kessler Foundation, Autism Speaks, New York Collaborates for Autism and the May & Stanley Smith Charitable Trust) to achieve high-impact inclusive employment goals.

For more information on the Workplace Initiative, please contact Workplace@posesfamilyfoundation.org.