

DIVERSIFYING YOUR WORKFORCE



*A Four-Step Reference Guide
to Recruiting, Hiring, & Retaining
Employees with Disabilities*

INCENTIVES & ROI

RECRUITING

INTERVIEWING & HIRING

ACHIEVING WORKPLACE SUCCESS

RETAINING VALUED EMPLOYEES

LINKS & RESOURCES



U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Disability Employment Policy
www.dol.gov/odep



INTRODUCTION

Competence and Flexibility...

...they are vital skills that employers seek in new hires. Today more than ever, businesses need people with a demonstrated ability to adapt to different situations and circumstances. And perhaps more than any other group, people with disabilities possess precisely these attributes. On a daily basis, people with disabilities must think creatively about how to solve problems and accomplish tasks. In the workplace, this resourcefulness translates into innovative thinking, fresh ideas and varied approaches to confronting business challenges and achieving success.

While research shows that people with disabilities make excellent employees, not all employers know how to effectively recruit, hire and retain such individuals. That's where this booklet comes in. It's a quick reference guide outlining the advantages of hiring people with disabilities, along with four simple steps to increasing the inclusiveness of your workforce. With numerous resources and Web links, the following pages are a helpful starting point for organizations looking to benefit from the talents of qualified individuals with disabilities.

This tool was developed by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). For free consulting services and resources to support the recruitment and hiring of people with disabilities, contact Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN) at 866-EARN (866-327-6669) (Voice/TTY) or www.earnworks.com. For free, confidential guidance on workplace accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and related legislation, contact the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) at 800-526-7234 (Voice), 877-781-9403 (TTY) or AskJAN.org. To learn more about DOL's efforts to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities, visit the ODEP Web site at www.dol.gov/odep.



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Why Hire People with Disabilities?

Access the resources below to learn why hiring employees with disabilities makes good business sense.

Return on Investment. Employing people with disabilities boosts your bottom line.

- **Diverse Perspectives: People with Disabilities Fulfilling Your Business Goals**
www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/diverse.htm
- **Business Case for Hiring People with Disabilities**
www.earnworks.com/businesscase

Tax Benefits for Private Employers. Three types of tax incentives are available to help employers cover accommodation costs for employees with disabilities and/or to make their workplaces accessible.

- **Employer Tax Incentives**
AskJAN.org/media/tax.html

Human Capital Benefits for Federal Employers. The Federal government has specific hiring rules that allow certain flexibilities in hiring people with disabilities and certain veterans with disabilities.

- **Hiring Authorities for Federal Employers**
www.earnworks.com/employers/tools/index.asp#fed
- **The ABCs of Schedule A**
www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/initiatives/lead/abcs_of_schedule_a.cfm
- **Leadership of the Employment of Americans with Disabilities (LEAD) Initiative**
www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/initiatives/lead/index.cfm
- **Office of Personnel Management**
www.opm.gov/disability

INCENTIVES & ROI

RECRUITING

STEP #1: Recruiting People with Disabilities

The first step in tapping this labor pool is effective recruitment. The following are practical resources to help with the process.

Be Proactive. Expand your outreach to target qualified candidates who will expand your talent pool. Visit the USBLN web site at www.usbln.org for ideas and resources.

Ensure Access. For personalized guidance on making your recruitment activities totally accessible, contact the **Job Accommodation Network**, a free, confidential service for employers and others, at AskJAN.org.

Build Tomorrow's Talent Pipeline. Mentoring activities and internships targeting youth and college students with disabilities can help you cultivate talent for the future.

- **Career-Focused Mentoring for Youth: The What, Why, and How**
www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/cfm.htm
- **Workforce Recruitment Program**
www.wrp.gov
- **Private Sector Internships for Students with Disabilities**
www.emerging-leaders.com

Utilize New Resources. Seek new avenues for publicizing job opportunities and identifying qualified candidates with disabilities.

- **Strategic Connections: Recruiting Candidates with Disabilities**
www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/connect.htm
- **HireVetsFirst/REALifeline**
www.hirevetsfirst.dol.gov

RECRUITING

INTERVIEWING & HIRING

STEP #2: Interviewing & Hiring People with Disabilities

The successful employment of people with disabilities requires accessible hiring processes and an understanding of the legal environment in which hiring takes place. The following resources can help.

General Guidance. As always, the goal of the interviewing and hiring process is to identify individuals who have the best mix of skills and attributes for a particular job. For more information on how to ensure that all qualified individuals can participate in this process, review *Opening Doors to All Candidates: Tips for Ensuring Access for Applicants with Disabilities* at www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/opening.htm.

Job Advertisements & Applications. For wording tips and samples of accessible online applications, check the following resources:

- **Employers' Practical Guide to Reasonable Accommodations for Job Advertisements and Applications** AskJAN.org/Erguide/Two.htm
- **Making the Online Application Process Accessible** AskJAN.org/corner/vol02iss05.htm
- **Tips for Designing Accessible Web Pages** AskJAN.org/media/webpages.html

Interviews. To be qualified job candidates, individuals with disabilities—like all other applicants—must have the necessary qualifications for the job (i.e., education, training, experience, skills, and/or licenses) and be able to perform the essential functions or duties of the job. When interviewing candidates, keep in mind this basic rule: *Ask applicants about their abilities, not their disabilities.*

- **Focus on Ability:** Interviewing Applicants with Disabilities www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/focus.htm
- **Employer's Practical Guide to Reasonable Accommodations for Interviews** AskJAN.org/Erguide/Two.htm
- **Disability Etiquette Tips for Speaking Engagements** AskJAN.org/media/etipresent.html
- **Interviewing Resources for Employers** www.earnworks.com/employers/tools/index.asp#interview

INTERVIEWING & HIRING

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STEP #3: Helping Your Employees Achieve Workplace Success

Once an employee with a disability is a part of the team, there are many resources available to help employers ensure workplace productivity, health, and safety.

Effective Communication. Employers and co-workers may be concerned that they will say the wrong thing, ask an inappropriate question, or unintentionally offend an applicant or colleague with a disability. Here are two resources with some excellent tips:

- **Effective Interaction: Communicating With and About People with Disabilities in the Workplace**
www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/effectiveinteraction.htm
- **Disability Awareness Information Kit** (an Australian publication)
www.openroad.net.au/access/dakit/disaware/disawarecontent.htm

Accommodations. All employees need the right tools and work environment to effectively perform their jobs. “Reasonable accommodations” are modifications or adjustments to jobs, work environments, or workplace policies that enable qualified employees with disabilities to perform the fundamental duties of their jobs and have equal access to benefits available to employees without disabilities. The following resources can help you understand reasonable accommodations, which are often easier and less expensive to implement than commonly believed:

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

AskJAN.org

- **Comprehensive List of JAN Publications**
AskJAN.org/pubsandres/list.htm
- **Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR)**
AskJAN.org/soar/index.htm
- **Employer’s Practical Guide to Reasonable Accommodation**
AskJAN.org/Erguide/Three.htm
- **Federal Accommodation Programs (for Federal employers)**
AskJAN.org/empl/index.htm

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STEP #3: Helping Your Employees Achieve Workplace Success

Office of Disability Employment Policy www.dol.gov/odep

- **Investing in People: Job Accommodation Situations and Solutions** www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/misc/invest.htm
- **The Job Accommodation Process: Steps to Collaborative Solutions** www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/misc/job.htm
- **Maximizing Productivity: Accommodations for Employees with Psychiatric Disabilities** www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/psychiatric.htm
- **Advancing Opportunities: Accommodations Resources for Federal Managers and Employees** www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/misc/advance.htm
- **America's Heroes at Work: Supporting Returning Service Members with TBI & PTSD** www.americasheroesatwork.gov
- **Customized Employment and Flexible Work Arrangements** www.dol.gov/odep/CE-FWA

Safety & Emergency Preparedness for Employees with Disabilities. A number of helpful resources can help employers ensure workplace safety and implement emergency management procedures that include people with disabilities, such as the following:

- **Emergency Preparedness and People with Disabilities** www.dol.gov/odep/programs/emergency.htm
- **Preparing the Workplace for Everyone: Accounting for the Needs of People with Disabilities – A Framework of Emergency Preparedness Guidelines for Federal Agencies** www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/ep/preparing2.htm
- **Effective Emergency Preparedness Planning: Addressing the Needs of Employees with Disabilities** www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/effective.htm
- **Employers' Guide to Including Employees with Disabilities In Emergency Evacuation Plans** AskJAN.org/media/emergency.html
- **Considering the needs of Employees with Disabilities During a Pandemic Flu Outbreak** AskJAN.org/media/employmentpandemicflufact.doc

ACHIEVING WORKPLACE SUCCESS

RETENTION

STEP #4: Retaining Valued Employees

Finally, employers must take steps to keep their employees happy, healthy, and professionally fulfilled. The resources below address career development for people with disabilities, disability-related leave, and return-to-work issues.

Career Development. One of the main reasons workers leave their jobs is lack of career advancement opportunities. To learn how to ensure the inclusion of employees with disabilities in training and professional growth opportunities, read *Career Development for People with Disabilities* at www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/ek00/career.htm. ODEP also funded the inaugural UCLA Leadership Institute for Managers with Disabilities. For information on the Institute go to www.anderson.ucla.edu/EEPlimd.xml.

Medical- and Disability-Related Leave. The following are useful resources to help employers and human resources professionals sort out which leave laws apply when employees have a disability, injury, and/or chronic illnesses:

- **Employment Laws: Medical and Disability-Related Leave**
www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/employ.htm
- **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Overview**
www.dol.gov/WHD/fmla/index.htm

Return-to-Work. Consult the following for information on transitioning ill, injured, or disabled employees returning to work:

- **Job Accommodations for Return-to-Work**
AskJAN.org/media/rtwfact.doc

Uniformed Services Employment & Reemployment Act (USERRA). Visit the following for information on employers' rights and responsibilities under this law, which protects civilian job rights and benefits for America's uniformed service members.

- **USERRA Information**
www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra
- **USERRA elaws Advisor**
www.dol.gov/elaws/userra.htm

RETAINING VALUED EMPLOYEES

LINKS & RESOURCES

Additional Employer Resources

Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Resources

- **ODEP Web site**
www.dol.gov/odep
A Federal policy agency that provides national leadership to promote policies and practices that improve employment opportunities and outcomes for people with disabilities.
- **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)**
AskJAN.org
800-526-7234 (Voice); 877-781-9403 (TTY)
Leading source of free, expert and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations, the ADA and related legislation, and disability employment issues.
- **Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN)**
www.earnworks.com
866-327-6669 (Voice/TTY)
Expert advice on hiring and retaining skilled, qualified workers.
- **Business \$ense**
www.dol.gov/odep/bsense/bsense.htm
Monthly tips for management success.
- **Business Case for Hiring People with Disabilities**
www.earnworks.com/BusinessCase/index.asp
Multi-media resource illustrating how disability adds value across all aspects of a business.
- **Customized Employment and Flexible Work Arrangements**
www.dol.gov/odep/CE-FWA
Information about customized employment, a flexible work arrangement that can assist employers in attracting and retaining the talents of people with disabilities.
- **Disability Nondiscrimination Law Advisor**
www.dol.gov/elaws/odep.htm
Guidance on employer and employees rights and responsibilities under federal disability nondiscrimination laws.

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Additional Employer Resources

Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Resources (continued)

- **Disability.gov**
www.disability.gov/employment
Federal, state and local resources for people with disabilities, service providers, employers and others.
- **America's Heroes at Work**
www.americasheroesatwork.gov
Strategies for helping service members with Traumatic Brain Injury and/or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder succeed at work.
- **ODEP Alliance Initiative**
www.dol.gov/odep/alliances/index.htm
Cooperative program that enables organizations committed to improving disability workplace practices to work with ODEP to develop and implement model policies and initiatives that increase recruiting, hiring, advancing, and retaining workers with disabilities.

Additional Resources

- **Career One-Stop: Resources for Business and Human Resources**
www.careeronestop.org/Audience/Businesses/Businesses.aspx
Career resources and workforce information for businesses, job seekers, students, and workforce professionals to foster talent development in a global economy.
- **DBTAC (Disability & Business Technical Assistance Centers)**
www.adata.org
National network of 10 regional ADA Centers that provide services for up-to-date information, referrals, resources, and training on the ADA to businesses, employers, government entities, and individuals with disabilities.
- **elaws Advisors**
www.dol.gov/elaws
Interactive e-tools that provide easy-to-understand information about a number of federal employment laws.

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Additional Employer Resources

Additional Resources (continued)

- **FlexOptions**

www.we-inc.org/flex.html

Assists business owners and organizations to develop workplace flexibility policies and procedures in response to the growing demand for such options in the workplace.

- **HireVetsFirst**

www.hirevetsfirst.dol.gov

Comprehensive career website for hiring veterans of America's military.

- **National Resource Directory**

www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov

Information and resources for wounded, ill and injured Service Members and their families and caregivers.

- **Innovative Workplace Safety Accommodations for Hearing-Impaired Workers**

www.osha.gov/dts/shib/shib072205.html

Provides employers, workers and professional organizations guidance on accommodating the safety and health needs of hearing-impaired individuals in the workplace.

- **Nondiscrimination Requirements for Federal Contractors**

www.dol.gov/ofccp

Information for contractors doing business with the Federal government about non-discrimination and affirmative action.

- **Safety and Health Topics: Ergonomics Resources**

www.osha.gov/SLTC/ergonomics/index.html

Information for employers on effective and successful ergonomic practices to ensure high productivity, avoidance of illness and injury risks, and increased satisfaction among the workforce.

- **Safety, Health And Return-to-Employment (SHARE) Initiative**

www.dol.gov/owcp/dfec/share/perform.htm

Information for Federal employers on reducing occupational injuries, illnesses and fatalities within Federal workplaces.

LINKS & RESOURCES

Additional Employer Resources

Additional Resources (continued)

- **Workforce3 One Knowledge Sharing Web Site**
www.workforce3one.org
An e-learning, knowledge sharing webspaces that offers workforce professionals, employers, economic development, and education professionals a dynamic network featuring innovative workforce solutions.
- **Campaign for Disability Employment (CDE)**
www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org
Outreach effort emphasizing the value and talents people with disabilities offer America's employers.
- **US Business Leadership Network (USBLN)**
www.usbln.org
National organization that represents employers using a "business to business" strategy to promote the business imperative of including people with disabilities in the workforce.
- **Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)**
www.shrm.org
Largest professional association devoted to human resource management.



CD-ROM

U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Disability Employment Policy
www.dol.gov/odep



TALENT HAS NO BOUNDARIES

*Workforce Diversity
Includes Workers
with Disabilities*



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