Building an Inclusive Workforce

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

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Competence and Flexibility...

...they are vital skills that employers seek. Today more than ever, businesses need people with the 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 translates into innovative thinking, fresh ideas, and varied approaches to confronting challenges and achieving success.

While research shows that people with disabilities make excellent employees, not all employers know how to effectively recruit, retain, and advance individuals with disabilities. That's where this booklet can help. It provides a quick outline of four simple steps to increasing workforce inclusion, complete with web links to resources available to help businesses benefit from the talents of qualified individuals with disabilities.

Helen Chang,
Web Developer

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Introduction

Competence and Flexibility...

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This tool was developed by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). To learn more about DOL's efforts to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities, visit ODEP's website at dol.gov/odep.

The people featured in this guide are people with disabilities—not models—photographed in their workplaces. Some of their disabilities are apparent, some are not. They reflect just a few of the millions of people with disabilities who add value to America's workplaces and economy every day.

Elaine Robnett Moore,
Jewelry Designer and Educator

Introduction

Embrace Inclusive Strategies

When it comes to doing business, including workers with disabilities offers a competitive edge. By incorporating people with disabilities into their human capital strategies, employers expand their pool of talent, skills, and creative business solutions. The resources below illustrate how workplace practices that include people with disabilities benefit everyone and make good business sense.

- **Inclusion@Work Framework**
  A multimedia policy tool that outlines seven core components of a disability-inclusive workplace, along with a menu of strategies for achieving them
  AskEARN.org/inclusion-work
- **Tax Incentives**
  Description of various tax incentives for which employers who hire people with disabilities may qualify
  AskJAN.org/topics/taxinc.cfm

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*Patty Rivas,
Store Owner and
Social Worker*

STEP 1 - Embrace Inclusive Strategies

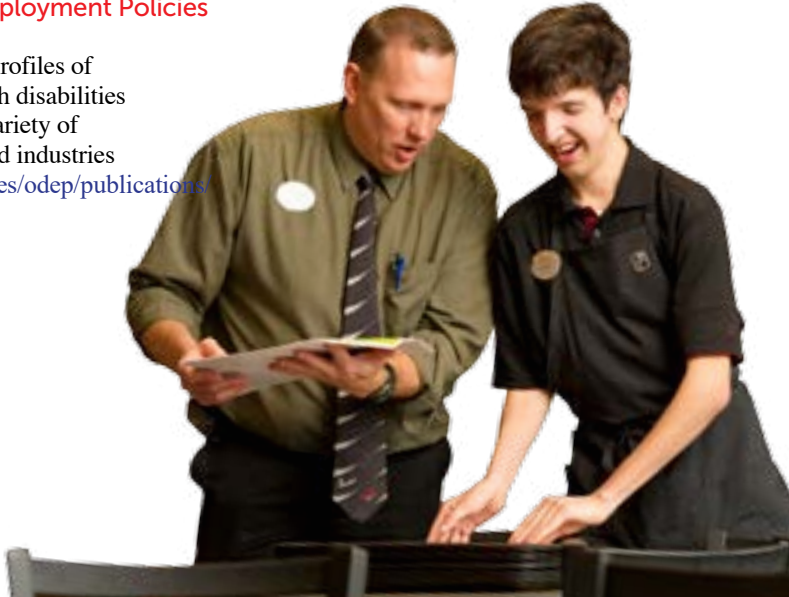# Embrace Inclusive Strategies

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- Business $ense
  Monthly newsletter featuring disability-
  related topics of interest to employers
  dol.gov/agencies/odep/publications/
  business-sense
- Disability Employment Policies
  in Practice
  Photographic profiles of
  individuals with disabilities
  working in a variety of
  occupations and industries
  dol.gov/agencies/odep/publications/
  success-stories

Carson Bartlet,
Restaurant Employee

STEP 1 - Embrace Inclusive Strategies

Create an Inclusive Culture

Organizations that value and appreciate each person for their individual differences and experiences benefit from diverse perspectives. Creating such an inclusive culture isn't difficult, but does require some forethought. The resources below can foster a welcoming work environment that is flexible and open to the talents of all qualified individuals, including those with disabilities.

- **What can YOU do? Campaign for Disability Employment**
  Nationwide campaign that offers a range of resources to assist organizations to implement internal disability employment awareness programs
  whatcanyoudocampaign.org

- **National Disability Employment Awareness Month**
  Annual outreach effort that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities
  dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/ndeam

- **Small Business & Disability Employment: Steps to Success**
  Outlines effective strategies for small businesses for recruiting and retaining qualified people with disabilities
  AskEARN.org/StepsToSuccess

Jeffery Krauthamer, Receptionist

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STEP 2 - Create an Inclusive Culture

Create an Inclusive Culture

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- **Fostering Disability-Inclusive Workplaces Through Employee Resource Groups**
  Explores how Employee Resource Groups can benefit employee and employer alike
  AskEARN.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/askearn_employeeresourcegroup_factsheet.pdf

- **A Toolkit for Establishing and Maintaining Successful Employee Resource Groups**
  Guidance for employers interested in developing or enhancing an Employee Resource Group (ERG) focused on disability
  AskEARN.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/erg_toolkit.pdf

- **Mental Health Toolkit: Resources for Fostering a Mentally Healthy Workplace**
  Helps employers learn about mental health and cultivate a welcoming and supportive work environment for employees who have mental health conditions
  AskEARN.org/mentalhealth

- **Emergency Preparedness Resources**
  Effective emergency plans and resources for employees with disabilities
  dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employment-supports/emergency-preparedness

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R.J. Martin, Circulation Clerk at a County Library

STEP 2 - Create an Inclusive Culture

Create an Inclusive Culture

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- **Disability Etiquette Resources**
  Information about disability etiquette in various workplace settings, including speaking engagements and customer service environments
  AskJAN.org/topics/disetiq.htm
- **Disability Nondiscrimination Law Advisor**
  Guidance for employers on determining which federal disability nondiscrimination laws apply to their business or organization and how to ensure compliance with them
  webapps.dol.gov/elaws/odep/
- **Do Ask, Do Tell: Encouraging Employees with Disabilities to Self-Identify**
  Explores research related to disability disclosure in the workplace and identi ies strategies for encouraging it in the context of the updates to Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act
  AskEARN.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/do_ask_do_tell.pdf

For additional resources related to creating an inclusive culture, visit ODEP's Diversity and Inclusion webpage at: dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers/diversity-inclusion
and Changing Attitudes webpage:
dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers/changing-attitudes.

Recruit and Hire

The goal of the recruitment and hiring process is to attract and identify individuals who have the best mix of skills and attributes for the job available. Ensuring that all qualified individuals—including those with disabilities—can participate in the process is critical to achieving this goal. The resources below can assist in understanding how to be disability inclusive in recruiting and hiring.

- **Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN)**
  Free consultation and technical assistance for employers seeking to recruit and hire qualiﬁed individuals with disabilities AskEARN.org
- **Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP)**
  Program that connects employers with pre-screened, highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities seeking internships or permanent employment
  wrp.gov/wrp

John Winfrey,
Senior Technical
Account Manager

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STEP 3 - Recruit and Hire

Recruit and Hire

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- **American Job Centers**
  Nationwide network of centers that can help businesses find qualified workers, including workers with disabilities
  servicelocator.org; 1-877-USA-JOBS
- **Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies**
  State agencies that link employers to job candidates with disabilities in their local areas
  soar.AskJAN.org/IssueConcern/214
- **Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology (PEAT)**
  Multi-faceted initiative promoting the employment, retention, and career advancement of people with disabilities through the development, adoption and promotion of accessible technology
  PEATworks.org
- **TalentWorks**
  A service of PEAT that helps employers and human resource (HR) professionals make their eRecruiting technologies accessible to all job seekers—including those with disabilities
  PEATworks.org/talentworks

Meg Krause,
Public Relations
Professional
and Veteran

STEP 3 - Recruit and Hire

Recruit and Hire

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- **Inclusive Internship Programs: A How-to Guide for Employers**
  Provides background and guidance on establishing inclusive internship programs
  dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/odep/pdf/inclusiveinternshipprograms.pdf

For additional resources related to the recruitment and hiring of people with disabilities, visit ODEP's Recruitment and Retention webpage at dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers/recruitment-retention and Accommodations webpage at dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers/accommodations.

Meghan Jones,
Office Clerk

STEP 3 - Recruit and Hire

Retain and Advance Valued Employees

Employers and employees both benefit from a work environment that facilitates the retention of all skilled, qualified workers through effective job accommodations for employees with disabilities. The resources below can assist in understanding how to effectively retain the talents of qualified employees with disabilities and help them advance and achieve workplace success.

- **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)**
  Free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations for employees with disabilities
  AskJAN.org; 1-800-526-7234 (Voice); 1-877-781-9403 (TTY)
- **Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN)**
  Free consultation and technical assistance for employers seeking to retain and advance employees with disabilities
  AskEARN.org/topics/retention-advancement/

Eric Wright,
Lead Technologist

STEP 4 - Retain and Advance Employees

Retain and Advance Valued Employees

- **Workplace Accommodation Toolkit**
  Resources and guidance on inclusive practices related to the reasonable accommodation process
  AskJAN.org/toolkit

- **Workplace Accommodations: Low Cost, High Impact**
  Summary of research revealing the low cost of accommodations for employees with disabilities relative to their positive impact
  AskJAN.org/topics/costs.cfm

- **Customized Employment/Flexible Work Arrangements**
  Information about customized employment, a flexible work arrangement that can help employers retain valued employees, including those with disabilities
  dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/customized-employment

- **Soft Skills**
  Introduction to workplace interpersonal and professional skills for employees
  dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/individuals/youth/transition/soft-skills

Kathy Peery, Legislative Affairs Specialist for a Federal Agency

STEP 4 - Retain and Advance Employees

Retain and Advance Valued Employees

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- **Supporting Employees Who Experience Unexpected Illness or Disability**
  Factsheet on Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work strategies
  dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ODEP/pdf/20140917StayAtWork.pdf
- **Job Accommodation Network Multimedia Training Microsite**
  Provides resources for employers to conduct training on disability employment topics for individuals or groups of employees
  AskJAN.org/events/Multimedia-Training-Microsite.cfm

For additional resources related to retaining and advancing people with disabilities, visit ODEP's Recruitment and Retention webpage at dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers/recruitment-retention and Accommodations webpage at dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers/accommodations.

Resources and Links for Federal Agencies

As the nation's largest employer, the Federal Government must model effective policies and practices that advance America's ideal of equal opportunity for all. Regulations implementing Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 501) specify that federal agencies must become model employers of individuals with disabilities. Federal agencies are required to develop and maintain "an affirmative action program plan" for the hiring, placement, and advancement of individuals with disabilities.

The resources on the next two pages can assist in fulfilling this directive.

- **Federal Exchange on Employment & Disability (FEED)**
  An interagency working group focused on information sharing, best practices, and collaborative partnerships designed to make the Federal Government a model employer of people with disabilities
  askearn.org/topics/federal-state-government-employment/federal-government-employment/federal-exchange-employment-disability-feed/

- **Federal Agency Employment Strategies: A Framework for Disability Inclusion**
  Outline of proactive disability employment strategies to attract and retain qualified jobseekers with disabilities
  dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/odep/pdf/faestrategies.pdf

- **Workforce Recruitment Program**
  Program that connects federal employers with pre-screened, highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities seeking internships or permanent employment
  wrp.gov/wrp

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Resources and Links for Federal Agencies

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- **Schedule A Hiring Authority**
  The ABCs of Schedule A
  eeoc.gov/abcs-schedule
- **Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP)**
  Centrally funded accommodation program that provides assistive technology and services free of charge to Department of Defense agencies
  cap.mil
- **Federal Workplace Mentoring Primer**
  Overview of basic practices, strategies, and available tools and resources for establishing formal mentoring relationships and programs within federal workplaces
  AskEARN.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/fed-wmp.pdf
- **Veterans Preference Advisor**
  Guidance on preferences that veterans, including wounded warriors, may be entitled to with regard to federal employment
  webapps.dol.gov/elaws/vetspref.htm
- **Federal Disability Hiring Programs**
  An overview of initiatives and flexibilities in hiring processes intended to increase the employment of people with disabilities in the Federal Government
  opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/
- **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)**
  A resource for laws, regulations, policy guidance, fact sheets, Q & A's, best practices, and other information on disability discrimination
  eeoc.gov/laws/types/disability.cfm

For additional resources for federal employers, visit ODEP's Federal Employers' webpage at
dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers/federal-employment.

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

DRIVING CHANGE
CREATING OPPORTUNITY

Inclusion drives innovation, and disability is part of the equation. This resource guide provides a great starting point for employers seeking to tap into the talent pool of qualified individuals with disabilities.

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

To download a digital version of Building an Inclusive Workforce, go to:
orders.gpo.gov/odep.aspx

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