

## Tips for Hiring People with Disabilities

**Most businesses want to commit to diversity and inclusion, but don't know where to begin.**

Hiring top-tier talent with disabilities helps you grow and retain a strong workforce and meet your bottom line. Your company should be able to hire the best person for the job, period. But when it comes to concrete ways to diversify their workforce, many business are unsure what they can do to be more visible to people with disabilities and how to encourage them to apply. Here are some tips to get you going.



### Be visible about your commitment

A strong employer brand advertises your company as an equal opportunity employer. Include a statement on your corporate website that promotes your workplace as accessible to people with disabilities. Talk about what you're doing for current employees, such as offering telecommuting or flexible schedules. Such policies are going to be appealing to every candidate. Showcase your company's diversity hiring initiatives as an equal opportunity employer and include on your corporate website. Make sure your website is accessible. Web communications are deemed to be "public accommodations," thus subject to ADA. But more than that, your site is the public face of your company, so let it speak for you.

### Amp up your ADA culture

Create formal policies and procedures on accommodations to help ensure consistency. Invite employees with disabilities to work with you on these policies, and then communicate accommodation policies to employees. If our supervisors, managers, HR professionals have some strong policies and procedures to refer to, it's more likely accommodation requests will be handled well and consistently. Make it a living part of your workplace, by embedding disability components into training for HR and in diversity training for all employees. Other ideas: Host a Disability Mentoring Day. Participate in National Disability Employment Awareness Month (October). Create internships for individuals with disabilities. Create opportunities for job shadowing. Participate in job fairs. Conduct informational interviews.

### Practice disability-friendly recruiting and interviewing

Targeted recruiting formats and consistent candidate communications go a long way. Use your corporate career pages to tell job applicants that you accommodate disabilities during the hiring process and include it in your job postings. Tell job candidates that your organization will accommodate them during the hiring process, and have information about accommodation polices in all offer letters/communications. This should include details about the interview and job location and the easiest way to get to the interview site. Advising the candidate as to when the interview process concludes is helpful for those who have to arrange for transportation. Align your brand with disability recruiting brands that are recognized and trusted by candidates with disabilities. Increase access to job candidates

with disabilities through outreach on sites that target this recruitment pool, and work with sourcing firms that specifically place candidates with disabilities.

## Make applying easy

Accessible logistics make a big difference. Meet new federal regulation requirements with an accessible application process – at every step of the way. User test your process to make sure there aren't spots that "fall through the cracks." Consult with job candidates who request interview accommodations to determine what format works best for them; use what you learn to keep improving your process. Consider opportunities like online career fairs that make logistics easy for both job candidates and recruiters. Virtual job fairs are attractive to this demographic, because the anonymity affords them a way to begin the conversation with an employer without having to deal with some of those things that are stumbling blocks on a first impression. Make the interview process as accessible as possible

## Do the math to make it happen

Take time to learn – and share – the benefits it bring to your business. **ROI:** Hiring inclusively can pay for itself in dollars and cents. There are some great tax incentives available for employers who hire employees with disabilities. Use our [Hire Gauge tool](#) to add up the ways that hiring people with disabilities helps you meet your bottom line. **Marketing:** Reaching out to those with disabilities has a ripple effect of attracting the family and friends of people with disabilities to your business. Customers with disabilities and their families, friends, and associates represent a trillion dollar market segment. Customers with disabilities and their families, friends and associates represent a trillion dollar market segment. Businesses that employ people with disabilities turn social issues into business opportunities that translate into lower costs, higher revenues, and increased profits. **Innovation:** Employees with disabilities bring unique experiences and understanding that transform a workplace and enhance products and services. Workers with disabilities and the businesses that employ them are leading, innovating and evolving the workforce

## Don't go it alone

Learn what vocational rehabilitation agencies and job placement assistance services are available in your state and community. Work with them on how you can participate, and distribute job announcements to them. Join the Business Leadership Network in your state. Many states built up expertise in assisting diversity and inclusion as part of the Ticket to Work program, and more recently the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Their knowledge and experience can help you tap into this labor pool.

Remember: strong HR policies plus clear communication and intentional inclusion equals hiring and retaining top talent. Your business, and your community, deserve no less.

*More information: [smartpolicyworks.com/disability/](http://smartpolicyworks.com/disability/)*

