

Frequently Asked Questions

- [I want to hire more people with disabilities. How do I get started?](#)
 - [How common are disabilities in the United States?](#)
 - [What performance standards should I have for my employees with disabilities?](#)
 - [What resources are available to help me attract candidates with disabilities?](#)
 - [Where can I find qualified candidates with disabilities?](#)
 - [Do I need to provide anything special for employees with disabilities?](#)
 - [How much do workplace accommodations cost?](#)
 - [How can we best attract and serve customers with disabilities?](#)
 - [How do I prepare managers and employees for an inclusive workforce?](#)
 - [Can I fire an employee with a disability who is not doing their job?](#)
 - [Are there tax incentives for hiring people with disabilities?](#)
 - [Where can I find out about the “Ticket to Work” program?](#)
 - [What are the legal risks associated with hiring employees with disabilities?](#)
 - [What are some other resources for employing people with disabilities?](#)
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I want to hire more people with disabilities. How do I get started?

As an executive or manager, committed to actively hiring people with disabilities, you can communicate the value of hiring people with disabilities with your staff. Depending on their level of awareness, you can provide them with training related to working with people with disabilities. You can also refer them to a [free online tutorial](#). The [Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network \(EARN\)](#) can also assist you in learning about processes, tools, and resources that can help you get started.

How common are disabilities in the United States?

Disabilities are more common than you think. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, one in five Americans has a disability. As the population ages that number is [expected to grow](#). We recognize people with disabilities when we see a wheelchair, a cane, a service animal, or a person using sign language. We do not necessarily recognize people with invisible disabilities including people with epilepsy, traumatic brain injury, mental health conditions, arthritis, diabetes, learning disabilities, or [other disabilities](#).

What performance standards should I have for my employees with disabilities?

You should hold all your employees to the same established performance standards for their positions. People with disabilities have the same skills as people without disabilities – the only difference is that they might do things differently. Employees with disabilities are contributing to business successes in many ways. This includes employees with developmental disabilities who prepare surgical trays in major hospitals, employees with visual disabilities who work in manufacturing plants, and employees with learning disabilities who lead national organizations.

What resources are available to help me attract candidates with disabilities?

[EARN](#) provides free consulting on disability employment matters, as well as assistance in finding candidates. The [USBLN®](#), a business-to-business network of employers with an interest in hiring people with disabilities, can assist in giving you ideas and guidance. There are also several other [national](#) and

[local](#) resources that can help. Some simple ways of attracting candidates with disabilities is to demonstrate that you are interested in employing them. This can include stating your commitment and interest on your career website, attending job fairs which are disability focused, posting jobs on disability-oriented job boards and including the visibility of employees with disabilities on your website and in your advertisements.

Where can I find qualified candidates with disabilities?

There is a vast system of employment service providers and programs that can help. Some of the larger ones include:

- [Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies](#)
- [Career One-Stop Centers](#)
- [Veteran Service Organizations](#)
- [Workforce Recruitment Program](#)
- [Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network](#)

In addition, you might look towards community-based and non-profit organizations, college and university disability coordinators, professional associations, and advocacy and networking groups.

Do I need to provide anything special for employees with disabilities?

Many employees with disabilities require nothing more than the consideration you may already be providing to your employees. This includes the use of flexible work schedules, teleworking, and restructuring workstations. Some employees may require accommodations such as specialized software. Accommodations are nothing more than tools to ensure that someone can be productive. If an accommodation is needed, the [Job Accommodation Network](#) (JAN) provides free consulting to help you determine the right accommodation. Many companies have found that by centralizing funding for accommodations at a corporate level, they can decrease managers' concerns about accommodations and can convey senior management commitment to increase the hiring of people with disabilities.

How much do workplace accommodations cost?

In general, reasonable workplace accommodations are low, or cost nothing. In 2007, JAN released the [results of a study](#) of 1,182 employers from a range of industries; 46% reported workplace accommodations cost absolutely nothing, while 45% experienced a low, one-time cost of around \$500.

How can we best attract and serve customers with disabilities?

You can strive to become recognized as a company which is disability friendly – one that is aware of the needs of people with disabilities and provides them and their extended networks with relevant products and services. Training your staff in disability etiquette will also give you a competitive advantage. The [Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers](#) (DBTACs) can provide you with support and assistance. The Department of Justice also provides a [free online tutorial](#) to assist you.

How do I prepare managers and employees for an inclusive workforce?

You may be surprised that very little preparation is required. Many managers and employees may be aware of disability matters and do not require any preparation. A good practice might be to include disability [etiquette](#) or [sensitivity training](#) as part of your new employee and/or annual training activities.

Can I fire an employee with a disability who is not doing their job?

Yes. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) states that as long as an individual with a disability has been provided with an accommodation, if requested, that individual can be treated the same as other employees when evaluating performance. This includes taking disciplinary actions for those who are not performing their essential job functions. If you are unsure whether you should accommodate or discipline,

you can contact [JAN](#) for guidance.

Are there tax incentives for hiring people with disabilities?

Yes. You may be eligible for \$2,400 to \$15,000 in tax credits. These tax credits are available to help employers cover the cost of accommodations for employees with disabilities and to make workplaces accessible. These include the IRS Code Section 44, Disabled Access Credit (Small Business Tax Credit), IRS Code Section 190, Barrier Removal Tax Deduction (Architectural/Transportation Tax Deduction) and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). Visit the Internal Revenue Service's website for more information on [these credits](#) and talk with your tax advisor.

Where can I find out about the "Ticket to Work" program?

The Social Security Administration's [Ticket to Work](#) program allows employers who register and hire people with disabilities who are receiving social security disability benefits to receive up to \$20,000 for every employee they hire who leaves the social security rolls.

What are the legal risks associated with hiring employees with disabilities?

One of the best ways to minimize risk is to create an inclusive work environment and to be aware of the rights of all employees. The legal risks of hiring employees with disabilities are no different from hiring from any other candidate pool. Companies report that they encounter more lawsuits related to customer safety than to disability employment. Visit the Office of Disability Employment Policy's (ODEP) website to learn more about [your responsibilities](#) under [federal laws](#) that protect individuals with disabilities.

What are some other resources for employing people with disabilities?

The Department of Labor's [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#) (ODEP) provides leadership on disability employment policies and practices through research yielding authoritative and credible data on employment of people with disabilities.

The [Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network](#) (EARN) provides cost-free consulting services to help employers recruit and hire qualified workers to meet their staffing needs.

The [Job Accommodation Network](#) (JAN) provides employers with information about accommodations and related issues to facilitate the employment and retention of workers with disabilities.

[Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers](#) (DBTACs) provide information, training, and technical assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

[Governors and Mayors Committees](#) provide state and local information on disability matters.

The [US Business Leadership Network](#) (USBLN[®]) promotes best practices in hiring, retaining, and marketing to people

[Vocational Rehabilitation \(VR\) Agencies](#) provide employers with access to candidates with disabilities and post-employment support.

One-Stop [Disability Program Navigators](#) are [State One-Stop](#) supports that provide information and guidance on disability employment matters.

[Other State and Local Resources](#)