



# UNDERSTANDING THE 7% DISABILITY UTILIZATION GOAL

In 2018, just 30% of all working-aged Americans with disabilities were employed, compared with 74% of working-aged Americans without disabilities.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, American employers are facing a talent shortage and increasingly turning to apprenticeship as a workforce solution. Apprenticeship recruitment, hiring, and retention practices can tap into more available talent by including qualified individuals with disabilities.

## What is the 7% Disability Utilization Goal?

To promote inclusion of more individuals with disabilities in apprenticeship programs, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) has set an aspirational goal that 7% of a sponsor's apprenticeship workforce consist of qualified individuals with disabilities. **This goal is a benchmark — not a quota or mandatory level to be reached.** However, sponsors must make good-faith efforts to reach this goal as they establish, manage, and grow their apprenticeship programs.

**Note that sponsors are NOT required to hire individuals that lack the necessary qualifications for their apprenticeship programs to meet the 7% goal.**

## How Will Sponsors Measure Their Progress Toward the 7% Goal?

There is a process for sponsors to determine the current disability makeup of their apprenticeship workforce to promote the inclusion of additional qualified individuals with disabilities in their programs.

# STEP 1

## INVITATION TO SELF-IDENTIFY AS AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY



By January 18, 2019, or two years after they register (whichever is later), Registered Apprenticeship sponsors<sup>2</sup> must begin inviting their apprentices and applicants for apprenticeship to voluntarily indicate whether the apprentice or applicant is an individual with a disability. Importantly, the request is to disclose whether apprentices and applicants are individuals with disabilities, not to identify what particular disability they have.

Current apprentices will receive initial invitations to self-identify and an annual reminder to voluntarily update their disability status. Applicants will be invited to self-identify at both the time of application and again if and when they have been offered an apprenticeship position. All sponsors will use the standard [Voluntary Disability Disclosure Form](#) to invite disability self-identification.

To ensure that apprentices and applicants know why this information is requested and how it will be used, the [Voluntary Disability Disclosure Form](#) explains that it allows the sponsor to measure how it is doing in reaching out to, enrolling, and providing equal opportunity in apprenticeship to qualified people with disabilities. The form also makes clear that the information will **not** be used for any employment decisions—and that individuals are protected from disability discrimination whether or not they disclose a disability.

## STEP 2

### WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

Once the self-identification process is underway, sponsors will analyze the representation of individuals with disabilities within their apprenticeship program. The sponsor will compare the proportion of current apprentices with disabilities (as reported on the [Voluntary Disability Disclosure Form](#)), by major occupational group, to the aspirational 7% goal. If the percentage of individuals with disabilities is less than 7%, the program's personnel processes and outreach and recruitment efforts must be reviewed to determine if impediments to equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities exist. Registration agency staff will assist the sponsor with this review.



Each sponsor must conduct its first disability workforce analysis by January 18, 2019, or two years after the sponsor's registration date (whichever is later).<sup>3</sup> After that, sponsors must conduct a disability workforce analysis at each compliance review and again if and when three years have passed without a compliance review. Each sponsor will document the results of its workforce analysis in the written affirmative action plan.

For more information, contact the Office of Apprenticeship:

apprenticeship@dol.gov  
(202) 693-2796  
[www.apprenticeship.gov](http://www.apprenticeship.gov)  
[www.doleta.gov/oa/eeo](http://www.doleta.gov/oa/eeo)



## WHAT STEPS SHOULD SPONSORS TAKE TO INCREASE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THEIR PROGRAMS?

If the sponsor identifies impediments to equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities, sponsors will need to undertake targeted outreach, recruitment, and retention activities. These activities include—but are not limited to—the following:



Providing information regarding the nature of the apprenticeship, requirements for selection, availability of apprenticeship opportunities, and the sponsor's equal opportunity pledge to groups serving individuals with disabilities, such as community-based organizations, Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, local community colleges, local high schools and vocational, career, and technical schools, and American Job Centers. Sponsors may easily identify targeted recruitment sources in their recruitment areas using the [Universal Outreach Tool](#).



Publishing apprenticeship openings in media with wide circulation in the sponsor's recruitment area.



Cooperating with local school boards and vocational education systems to develop and/or establish relationships with pre-apprenticeship programs targeting students with disabilities to prepare them to meet the standards and criteria to qualify for entry into apprenticeship programs.



Establishing linkage agreements or partnerships with pre-apprenticeship programs, community-based organizations, advocacy organizations, or other appropriate organizations in recruiting qualified individuals with disabilities.

Additionally, after every selection cycle for registering apprentices, the sponsor must evaluate the overall effectiveness of these activities and refine its targeted outreach, recruitment, and retention activities as needed. The expanded outreach and recruitment activities the sponsor plans to take must be included in the program's written affirmative action plan, and records of these activities must be maintained.

### INFORMATION AND RESOURCES RELATED TO THIS TOPIC

- [Voluntary Disability Disclosure Form](#)
- [Disability Self-Identification Resource Page](#)
- [Universal Outreach Tool](#)

<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table 1: Employment status of the civilian non-institutional population by disability status and selected characteristics, 2018 annual averages.

<sup>2</sup> This deadline applies to sponsors registered with the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship; sponsors registered with a State Apprenticeship Agency should check with that agency to determine when the self-identification invitation requirement will go into effect.

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