

Best Practices

Creating an Inclusive Workforce

- **Centralized Accommodation System** – Centralized accommodation systems are a best practice in hiring and retaining employees with disabilities. With centralized accommodation systems, contractors can improve and streamline the accommodation process making it more efficient for employees with disabilities. A centralized accommodation system also helps ensure that contractors have sufficient expertise and funds in place to ensure accommodations requests are being appropriately reviewed and accommodations appropriately provided throughout the company. This is an efficient, high impact approach for contractors to better serve their employees.
- **Accessible Online Recruiting Tools** – In today’s technology centric business environment, online application systems are commonplace. Contractors and individuals with disabilities lose when accessibility restraints exist. Contractors are encouraged to utilize all avenues, including those provided by U.S. DOL Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), to make their systems accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- **CEO Leadership through Correspondence and Video** – Support from senior leadership is crucial for workforce programs to be effective. Contractors are encouraged to support their Disability Inclusion programs via various forms of media releases, both internally and externally.
- **Coordinate with State or local Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies** – Vocational Rehabilitation agencies are available to individuals with disabilities to help find and retain jobs. These organizations have relationships with individuals and their qualifications and are invaluable resource for matching an individual’s skills with jobs.
- **Comprehensive and Welcoming Self-Id Program** – Self-identifying as an individual with a disability is often internally stigmatized. It is critical that employers create an environment in which applicants and employees are comfortable identifying that they have a disability even when it is not apparent.
- **Disability Inclusion Programs** – Disability inclusion programs help establish a pipeline of skilled applicants with disabilities for companies. They also ensure that employees with disabilities are fully included in all aspects of employment, and let employees and potential employees know that the contractor is a welcoming place for individuals with disabilities.
- **Employee Resource Groups** – Employee Resource Groups (ERG) offer employees an opportunity to network, address shared issues and concerns and receive support from similarly situated individuals.
- **Chief Accessibility Officer** – Chief Accessibility Officers (CAO) are key leaders who guide contractors policies and practices in order to ensure accessible work environments and full engagement and utilization of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of employment. The CAO facilitates Section 503 compliance and ensures the use accessible practices and technologies in the workforce.

Stakeholder Resources

- [U.S. DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy \(ODEP\)](#) — The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is the only non-regulatory federal agency that promotes policies and coordinates with employers and all levels of government to increase workplace success for people with disabilities.
- [Workforce Recruitment Program \(WRP\)](#) — The WRP is a recruitment and referral program that connects federal and private sector employers nationwide with highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to prove their abilities in the workplace through summer or permanent jobs.
- ["Who I AM" Public Service Announcement](#) — Produced by The Campaign for Disability Employment which is funded by ODEP.
- [National Organization on Disability \(NOD\)](#) — NOD focuses on increasing employment opportunities for the 80-percent of working-age Americans with disabilities who are not employed. NOD works with employers and partners to develop a more disability inclusive workforce, helping them to comply with all applicable regulations including section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- [Disability:IN](#) — This is a worldwide nonprofit organization that helps businesses meet and exceed their goals through disability inclusion in the workplace, supply chain, and marketplace. Contact your local affiliate for more information.
- [State Vocational Rehab \(VR\) Agencies](#) — These agencies provide a wide range of services to help people with disabilities train for, find, and keep jobs that fit their skills and interests. VR agencies can also connect businesses with skilled workers with disabilities in their area.
- [American Job Centers \(AJCs\)](#) — These centers located in communities across the country can help employers by connecting them with a "Business Services Representative". You'll get help with recruiting, hiring, or training employees, including people with disabilities who are ready and willing to work.
- [Centers for Independent Living \(CIL\)](#) — CILs promote independent living and equal access for people of all ages with all types of disabilities. They often work with local employers interested in hiring qualified workers with disabilities.
- [Inclusion@Work](#) — Identifies promising employment policies and practices for recruiting, hiring, retaining and advancing qualified individuals with disabilities.
- [Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion \(EARN\)](#) — ODEP-funded service that helps employers hire and retain workers with disabilities.
- [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#) — ODEP-funded service that provides free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and other disability employment issues.

Comprehensive and Welcoming Self-Id Programs

[EARN Networks Expert Tips](#)

