



# Best Practices: Recruitment and Hiring of Individuals with Disabilities

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**“Equality is the public recognition, effectively expressed in institutions and manners, of the principle that an equal degree of attention is due to the needs of all human beings.”**

— Simone Weil

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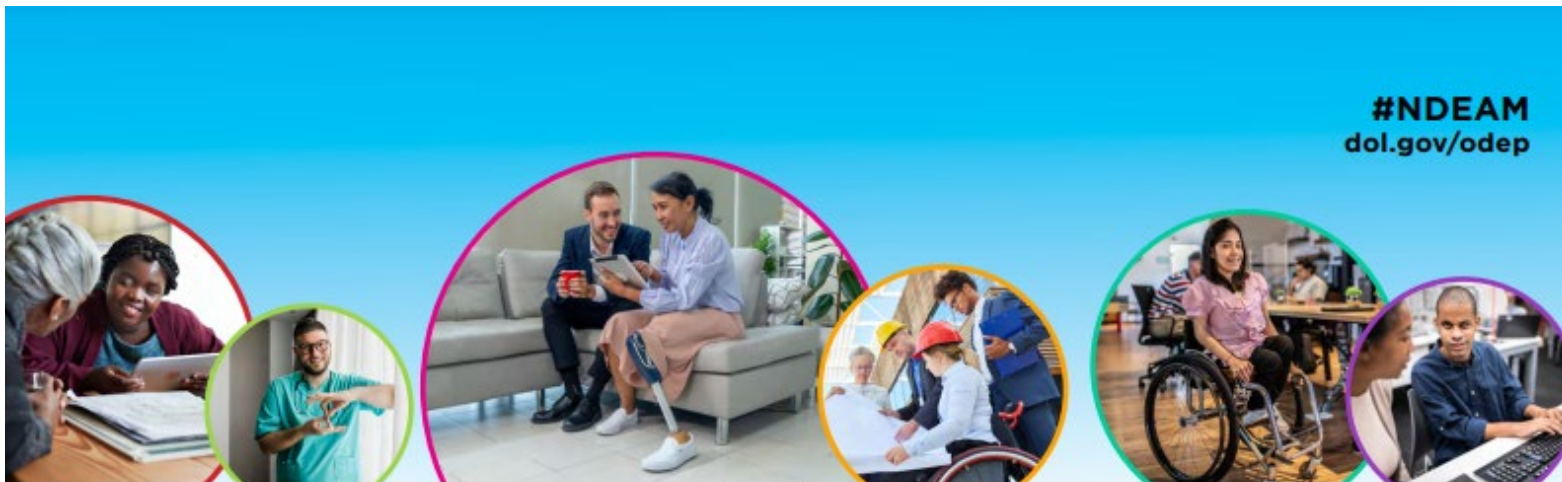


U.S. Department of the Interior | Office of Human Capital



# National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

Office of Human Capital



## Access to Good Jobs for All

National Disability Employment Awareness Month



OFFICE OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT POLICY  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



# We are Human Beings – not Statistics...however, surveys show:

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- The [unemployment rate](#) for people with a disability was 7.2 percent in 2023, about twice that of those with no disability (3.5%).
- In 2023, the [employment-population ratio](#) for people with a disability increased by 1.2% to 22.5%. The employment-population ratio for people with a disability was the highest recorded ratio since comparable data were first collected in 2008.
- People with a disability [accounted](#) for about 13% of the population in 2023.
- A vast majority of HR professionals and managers, around 97% and 92% respectively, [report](#) that employees with disabilities consistently perform at the same level or even better than their colleagues without disabilities.

**“Being disabled should not mean being disqualified from having access to every aspect of life.” -Emma Thompson**

# Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in the Federal Workforce



## Promoting Paid Internships



Issue guidance to increase the availability of paid internships, fellowships, and apprenticeships; reduce reliance on unpaid internships and similar programs; and improve outreach to and recruitment of individuals from underserved communities.

## Partnerships & Equitable Recruitment



Facilitate the recruitment of individuals who are members of underserved communities for Federal employment opportunities.

## Professional Development & Advancement/Training & Learning



Issue guidance for tracking demographic data for professional development programs. Implement/increase DEIA training and issue related guidance and best practices.

## Advancing Equity for Employees with Disabilities



Assess current hiring practices, evaluate equity in employment opportunities and financial security, and improve the process for requesting reasonable accommodations.



## Key Stakeholders & Programs: Disability Recruitment, Accessibility & Fostering an Inclusive Workforce

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- Departmental & Bureau/Office Leadership
- [Servicing HR Office Subject Matter Experts](#)
- HR Professionals
- [Selective Placement Program Coordinators](#)
- [Disability Program Managers](#)
- [Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators](#)
- [Veteran Employment Coordinators](#)
  
- Federal, State and Local Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies
- Disability Inclusion Programs
- Employee Resource Groups
- Inter-Bureau Expert Teams (I-BET) & Communities of Practice (COPs)

*Use the skills that I have got.*

*Do not focus on what I have not.*

*Of course, I am aware of my limitation.*

*Yet, I, too am a part of Earth's creation.*

*-William E. Lightbourne*



# “E”nsure...

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1. **Employ.** In order to ensure that individuals with disabilities are included in the workforce, take a close look at your hiring and interviewing process.
2. **Enable.** Leaders should provide employees with disabilities with accessible tools and technology and/or a formal accommodations program.
3. **Engage.** Organizations need to foster an inclusive culture and build awareness through recruitment, disability education programs and grass-root events.
4. **Empower.** Leaders should provide mentoring and coaching initiatives to help people with disabilities to succeed.

**“People with disabilities tend to be some of the most creative, innovative and, quite frankly, most loyal employees. A person with a disability wakes up everyday thinking about being innovative – that is a skill set. That ability to problem solve is innate to them.”**

David Casey, VP, Workforce Strategies & Chief Diversity Officer, CVS Health



# Taking Action on Accessibility

“The Practical Employer and the ADA: Successful Hiring” [job descriptions](#) & [accessible recruiting](#) videos



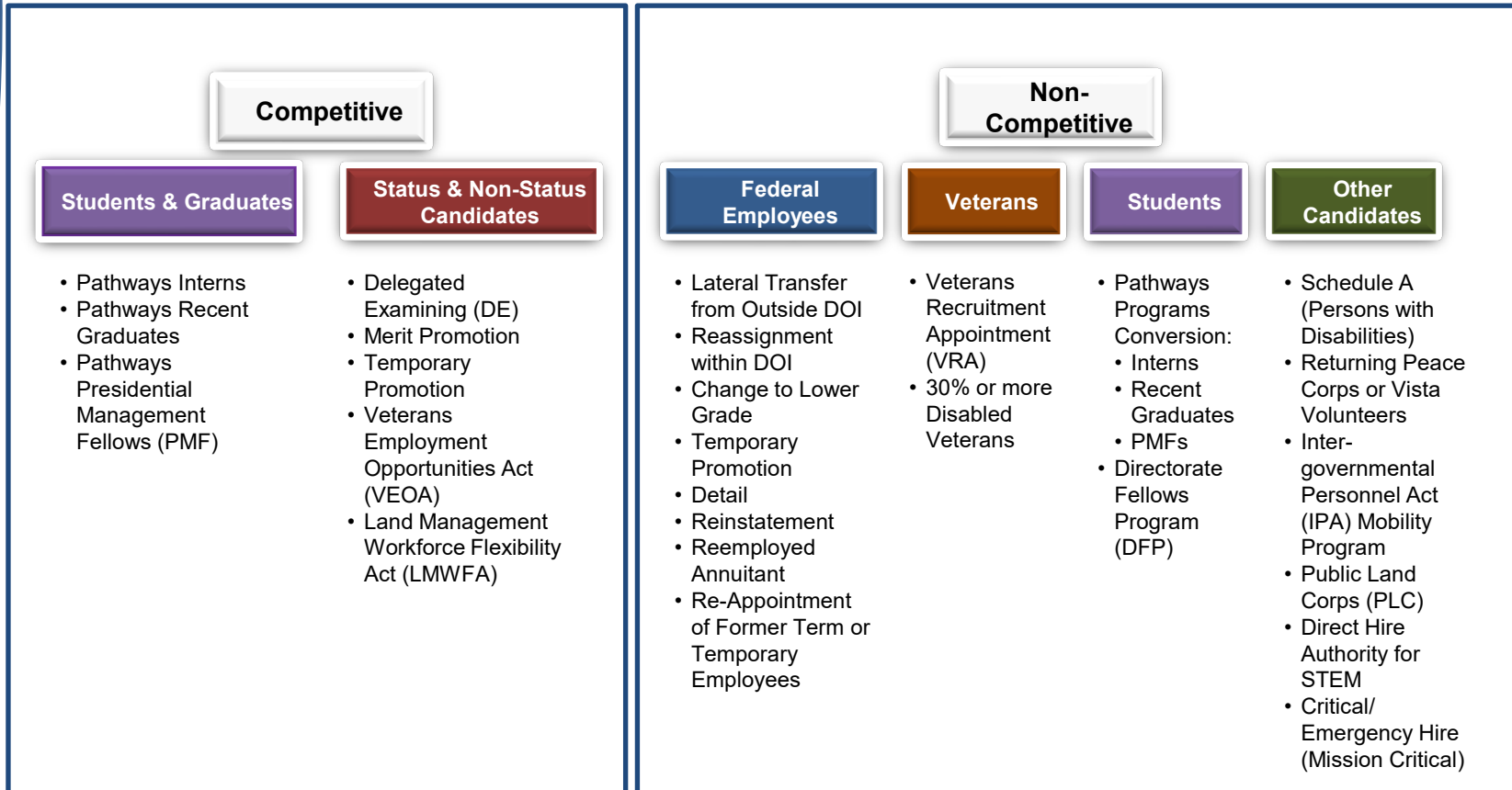
**Encouraging Applicants with Disabilities:**  
[Job Descriptions and Announcements](#)

**Accessible and Authentic Interviews  
for Candidates with Disabilities**

[Standardizing the Interview Approach for All Candidates](#)



# Leverage Strategic Hiring Authorities



“Being unconscious is the ultimate disability.” – Jessa Gamble





# The ABCs of Schedule A

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The *ABCs* of Schedule A for the Hiring Manager - [HTML](#)

The *ABCs* of Schedule A for the HR Professional - [HTML](#)

The *ABCs* of Schedule A for the Disability Program Manager - [HTML](#)

The *ABCs* of Schedule A for Service Providers - [HTML](#)



**U.S. Equal Employment  
Opportunity Commission**

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“There is no greater disability in society, than the inability to see a person as more.” – Robert M. Hensel



# Disability Recruitment & Selection Best Practices

- **Organizing** an agency disability recruitment task force (e.g., “Hiring Tiger Team”) made up of HR staff, EEO staff, current employees with disabilities and managers who have hired persons with disabilities to help the agency establish a network of disability recruitment resources.
- **Adopting** special recruitment programs for individuals with targeted disabilities.
- **Appointing** an SPPC to recruit individuals with disabilities.
- **Holding** formal and informal briefing sessions with representatives from recruiting sources.
- **Establishing** formal arrangements with representatives from recruitment sources for referral of applicants.
- **Implementing** a training program on how and why to hire individuals with disabilities and delivering it to agency employees responsible for recruitment.
- **Using** accessible online applications and recruitment and social networking sites so that job seekers with disabilities can learn about the agency and its hiring initiatives.
- **Posting** job announcements on accessible online job boards that specialize in identifying qualified individuals with disabilities (including veterans with disabilities), in disability-related publications and with specific disability service organizations.
- **Participating** in career fairs targeting veterans and other candidates with disabilities.
- **Engaging** current employees or an ERG as referral sources and asking if they know individuals with disabilities who would make good job candidates.



# Disability Recruitment & Selection Best Practices, continued

- **Including** people with disabilities on agency recruitment teams.
- **Building** a talent pipeline for youth and young adults with disabilities.
- **Attracting** qualified individuals with disabilities not currently in the workforce.
- **Developing** specific and targeted strategies for recruiting, hiring and integrating veterans with disabilities, including wounded returning service members, and internal training on these strategies.
- **Adopting** an awards program for senior management officials who make significant contributions toward the hiring and retention of disabled veterans.
- **Developing** an email distribution list of disability advocacy groups, both nationally and in the local geographic area, and regularly sending email notices to these organizations with all job openings, as well as a description of the Schedule A hiring authority for people with disabilities and basic instructions on how to apply for a federal job using it.
- **Using** social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to help recruit individuals with disabilities and raise awareness of the agency as an inclusive employer.
- **Assisting** hiring managers in identifying the essential functions of positions to ensure that applicants have the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully perform them, with or without reasonable accommodations.
- **Reviewing** personnel processes and their implementation on an annual basis and making necessary modifications or improvements, when appropriate.



# Federal Disability Recruitment Resources for HR Practitioners

- [Federal Agency Employment Strategies: A Framework for Disability Inclusion](#) (PDF) — A guide that outlines promising and emerging employment strategies and practices for recruiting, hiring, advancing, and retaining qualified individuals with disabilities in federal agencies.
- [Workforce Recruitment Program \(WRP\)](#) — A program that connects federal employers nationwide with highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities who are seeking summer internships or permanent employment.
- [OPM Federal Employment of People with Disabilities](#) — Information on federal disability hiring programs, reasonable accommodations in Federal workplaces, related laws and executive orders, and other resources.
- [Special Hiring Authorities for Veterans](#) — Information about special hiring authorities federal agencies can use to hire veterans, including disabled veterans.
- [Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program \(CAP\)](#) — The federal government's centrally funded accommodation program. Provides assistive technology and services free of charge to federal agencies.
- [Promising and Emerging Practices for Enhancing the Employment of Individuals with Disabilities Included in Plans Submitted by Federal Agencies Under Executive Order 13548](#) (PDF) — This summary report identifies promising practices for advancing the recruitment, hiring, and retention of individuals with disabilities identified in 10 selected agency plans submitted under Executive Order 13548.



# Disability Recruitment Resources, continued

- [Return-to-Work Toolkit for Employees and Employers](#) — Information to help employers and employees understand the return-to-work process and resources to assist in getting employees back on the job quickly.
- [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#) — ODEP-funded service that provides free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations.
- [Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion \(EARN\)](#) — ODEP-funded service that helps employers hire and retain workers with disabilities.
- [Opening Doors to All Candidates: Tips for Ensuring Access for Applicants with Disabilities](#) — Information on how to ensure an accessible hiring process.
- [Focus on Ability: Interviewing Applicants with Disabilities](#) — Information on interviews when an applicant happens to have a disability.
- [Disability:IN Affiliates](#) — Disability:IN is a worldwide nonprofit organization that helps businesses meet and exceed their goals through disability inclusion.
- [State Vocational Rehabilitation \(VR\) 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.
- [Centers for Independent Living \(CIL\)](#) — CILs promote independent living and equal access for people of all ages with all types of disabilities.
- [Workers with Disabilities: Where Can Employers Find Qualified Applicants with Disabilities?](#) — Article from the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) that details several ways to recruit workers with disabilities.



# Where Are the Schedule A Eligible Applicants Searching for Careers?

- [AbilityOne.gov](#): Offer employment assistance to people who are blind or have other significant disabilities.
- [ADA National Network](#): Regional ADA Centers provide information, guidance and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- [Go Government](#): This site from the Partnership for Public Service is a “one-stop shop” for how to find and apply for Federal Government jobs.
- [Higher Education Recruitment Consortium \(HERC\)](#): HERC helps job seekers with disabilities find employment at colleges, universities, teaching hospitals, labs, government agencies and associated employers.
- [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\) Employment Guide: Finding a Job that is Right for You](#): This employment guide developed by JAN provides information, tools and resources for job seekers with disabilities.
- [JobTIPS Student](#): This free online program offers real world examples and assistance to teens and adults transitioning to the workplace. The program addresses the social and behavioral differences that might make identifying, obtaining, and keeping a job more difficult for an individual with a disability.
- [My Employment Options](#): This is a Certified Employment Network (EN) through the Social Security Administration’s Ticket to Work Program. They provide supports and services to job seekers with disabilities who are looking for at-home employment opportunities.
- [mySkills myFuture](#): This U.S. Department of Labor website helps laid-off workers and other career changers find new occupations to explore.
- [OurAbility Connect](#): Connects job seekers with disabilities and employers by allowing job seekers to create online profiles and demonstrate experience by accumulating individual ability points. Employers can post jobs and browse candidate profiles in a format that is more dynamic than a typical resume. Our Ability is a Disability-Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE®).
- [WISE Webinars](#): These online events provide information on the Social Security Administration’s Ticket to Work Program and other Work Incentives.



# Where are Disabled Veterans Searching for Careers?

- [Veterans Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment \(VR&E\) Coordinators](#): The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs offers a variety of support services for veterans with disabilities.
- [National Resource Directory](#): Connects wounded warriors, service members, veterans and their families with services at the national, state and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration.
- [Compensated Work Therapy](#): This Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) vocational rehabilitation program matches work-ready veterans with competitive jobs and consults with business and industry help meet their employment needs.
- [Operation Warfighter](#): This is a temporary assignment/internship program, developed by the Department of Defense, for service members that are convalescing at military treatment facilities.
- [Paralyzed Veterans of America Paving Access for Veterans Employment \(PAVE\) Program](#): PAVE provides vocational counseling and job placement assistance to any veteran, active-duty service member, spouse or caregiver across the country.
- [Wounded Warriors Project Warriors to Work Programs](#): This veteran employment program provides career guidance and support services to wounded warriors, their families and caregivers interested in transitioning to the civilian workforce.
- [Veteran and Military Transition Center](#): The Veteran and Military Transition Center is a one-stop website for employment, training, and financial help after military service.
- [Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program Employment Resource Guide](#): Comprehensive information for military families on employment resources.
- [O\\*Net Crosswalk Search](#): Tools to help service members understand how they can translate military skills to civilian career skills.

# Disability Recruitment & Selection

## Best Practices Quick Reference Summary

1. Source candidates from disabled job-seeker candidate pools available through state agencies that provide vocational and employment services.
2. Source candidates from external support services and networks that support disabled job-seekers.
3. Provide instruction to recruiters on screening and interviewing job candidates with disabilities.
4. Provide instruction to hiring managers on interviewing job candidates with disabilities.
5. Provide instruction/guidance on interviewing candidates with disabilities.
6. Conduct a secondary review of disabled candidates who are screened out of the early stages of the hiring process to ensure there were no barriers to their full consideration.
7. Ensure that job announcements identify the agency as an equal opportunity employer and encourage persons with disabilities to apply.
8. Ensure that recruiting and application materials are available in alternative accessible formats (e.g. braille, large print, and electronic)
9. Ensure that all recruitment materials include specific instructions on how to request accommodations.
10. Ensure that job announcements use plain language that clearly describes required qualifications and job duties.
11. Review and determine essential functions for all job positions to ensure that there is clarity on concepts.
12. Ensure that persons with disabilities are represented in external communications, recruitment posters, and other relevant materials.







# Inclusion Elevates Us All

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“Hold my hand and walk with me.  
We must break the back of social inequity;  
We must empower every individual with a disability  
To live with dignity in an inclusive society.”  
-William E. Lightbourne

“[by] this most sorrowful way I was compelled to tread, I learned respect and reverence for every human mind. It was my child who taught me to understand so clearly that all people are equal in their humanity and that all have the same human rights. None is to be considered less, as a human being, than any other, and each must be given his place and a safety in the world. I might never have learned this in any other way. I might’ve gone on in the arrogance of my own intolerance for those less able than myself.

My child taught me humanity.”  
-Pearl S. Buck, *The Child Who Never Grew*

## QUESTIONS?

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