

Arizona Employer Toolkit:

A Job For All

Diversifying your workforce through the hiring and retention of individuals with disabilities



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the growing network of employers who have either made the decision, or are seeking information, to grow their existing employee base to include individuals with disabilities. Currently throughout the United States, over 65% of individuals with disabilities are unemployed. Within the State of Arizona, 65.9% of individuals with disabilities are unemployed (*2016 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates published by the US Census Bureau*).

As more people with disabilities enter the workforce and begin looking for employment, it is important as a business owner or operator that you understand the incredible benefits you could be enjoying by hiring employees of all abilities.

This handbook is meant to provide you with the information you need to begin employing people of all abilities, including financial and tax incentives; how and why hiring people of all abilities is good for your business; and where to find qualified employees.



HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law in 1990. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public.

The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. The ADA is divided into five titles (or sections) that relate to different areas of public life, the first of which relates to Employment.



HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This interactive guide was created to be a reference for human resource professionals, recruiters, training providers, managers, business owners, executives, and anyone else interested in recruiting, hiring and retaining employees with disabilities within Arizona.

Within the content of this publication you will find valuable information and resources, and links to pertinent documentation that will help you navigate through the State of Arizona's employment resources for people with disabilities.

BUILDING THE BUSINESS CASE

Reasons to Employ People with Disabilities

1. **Job Retention:** Employees are known for being loyal to their employers and often remain at their jobs for years, thereby reducing turnover.
2. **Dependability:** Employees with disabilities have lower rates of absenteeism.
3. **Pre-screened:** Every effort is made to pre-screen candidates for employment to ensure that the applicant meets the minimum qualifications of the job.
4. **Training:** If needed or desired by the employer, the person can be assisted to learn the requirements of the job by skilled job coaches, thereby reducing employer training time.
5. **Expand Market Share:** Employees with disabilities can relate better to customers with disabilities, who represent \$1 trillion in annual aggregate consumer spending.
6. **Employee Morale:** Many businesses report that employing people with disabilities increases the morale and productivity of every employee.

Hiring qualified workers of all abilities just makes good business sense!

The Business Case

Hiring a qualified person with a disability brings greater benefits beyond filling an open job. There's a solid business case, too ([Think Beyond the Label](#)). Here are just a few of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities:

Reason #1: RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)

Businesses that employ people with disabilities turn social issues into business opportunities. These opportunities translate into lower costs, higher revenues and increased profits. Capitalize on the ROI of employing people with disabilities:

Increase Revenues

- Access new markets
- Improve productivity through innovative and effective ways of doing business

Reduce Costs

- Reduce training costs
- Reduce hiring costs due to increase retention

Enhance Shareholder Value

- Capitalize on opportunities to meet business goals

Reason #2: MARKETING

Customers with disabilities and their families, friends and associates represent a trillion dollar market segment (that's \$1,000,000,000,000 - TWELVE ZEROS), according to the [U.S. Dept. Of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy's AskEarn.org](#). They, like other market segments, purchase products and services from companies that best meet their needs. A large number of Americans also say they prefer to patronize businesses that hire people with disabilities. Another benefit employing people with disabilities is increasing your opportunity to gain a lasting customer base. Very often, these are employees who will show great loyalty to their employer when they feel supported in their work environment.

Capitalize On New Market Opportunities

- Mirror the market to attract a wider customer base
- Increase your market share

Develop New Products and Services

- Respond to market place needs
- Lead your market
- Increase profitability

Reason #3: INNOVATION

Innovation is key to the success of your business. Employees with disabilities bring unique experiences and understanding that transform a workplace and enhance products and services. As part of your team, these employees can bring these experiences to help build your business and lead your company into the future, together.

Workplace Innovation

- Create more efficient and effective business processes
- Develop and implement management strategies to attract and retain qualified talent
- Use technology in new ways to increase productivity

Product and Service Innovation

- Stimulate new product and service development through disability-inclusive diverse teams
- Customize products and services to increase profitability

Define the Future

- Foster the development of next-generation products and services

DISPELLING THE MYTHS REGARDING THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The following dispels some of the common myths.

MYTH: Individuals with disabilities do not have the right skills for business.

Employees with disabilities have strengths, traits and qualities that make them valuable to the workforce, including perseverance, problem solving, goal setting and determination. Often, their unique characteristics and skills are well-suited to a particular business. For example, while some employees may find repetitive work boring, others thrive on routine and predictability. Often, too, there are many untapped educated minds in the pool of candidates with disabilities.

Employees with disabilities can take advantage of many training opportunities to help them acquire the skills needed. In addition, some people with disabilities can benefit from employment specialists and job coaches who assist them while they are learning.

Additionally, a Harris poll discovered that 82 percent of managers said it isn't any harder to supervise employees with disabilities than it is employees without. There are extensive benefits to a company that employs people with disabilities, such as having reliable and loyal workers, diversifying the talent pool and even saving money.

MYTH: Supports in the workplace would be too costly.

According to the National Center on Workforce and Disability (NCWD), the majority of employees—at least 73 percent—don't require any type of accommodation. Of the ones that do, 51 percent cost less than \$500. For excellent examples of accommodations, visit the National Center on Workforce and Disability (NCWD). As an added bonus, these accommodations have been found to benefit other employees without disabilities.

The most requested accommodation is a flexible work schedule, which costs nothing. According to Bradley Bellacicco of the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce, *"Any operation that has more than a handful of workers is going to have to make accommodations. This might include not asking an employee with a bad back to lift a heavy box or not requiring an employee with poor eyesight to read fine print. You're not doing something unusual. You're accommodating the people you work with without even thinking about it."*

Finally, the federal government offers tax incentives to help employers pay for any accommodations or modifications that will make their businesses accessible to persons with disabilities. Studies indicate, however, that the number one reason employers hire people with disabilities is NOT the tax credits or incentives; it is because employees with disabilities are loyal, dependable and remain on the workforce longer than other employees.

MYTH: Employees with disabilities can be easily offended.

Common etiquette can avoid hurt feelings. Many people worry that they may say the wrong thing to a person who has a disability, but people with disabilities know that others may not know the appropriate language.

People with disabilities are people first. Using language that puts the individual first is common sense (person who has diabetes vs. diabetic; person with a disability vs. disabled).

There are a number of things employers can do to include people with disabilities in your workforce. The Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN) recommends several strategies including:

- Conduct training for employees including discrimination prevention and ADA-specific training for managers and supervisors.
- Committing to diversity and equitable employment for all individuals regardless of their disabilities.
- Surveying employees to understand their perceptions of inclusion or bias.
- Offering mentoring opportunities and including employees with disabilities.
- Focus recruiting and retention efforts on employees with disabilities.
- Include diversity and inclusion effectiveness as part of supervisors' job responsibilities.

MYTH: Coworkers may not want to work with people with disabilities and their productivity will decrease.

People with disabilities who have overcome challenges and who demonstrate a strong commitment and loyalty to the employer are often a positive influence on their coworkers.

MYTH: Getting information on hiring and working with people with disabilities is expensive and time consuming.

There are a number of resources available to employers. See the Resources section in this toolkit for more information.

MYTH: Hiring people with disabilities makes businesses vulnerable to litigation.

There is no evidence that supports this.

MYTH: Supporting people with disabilities can adversely affect the businesses bottom line.

It's actually the opposite. Hiring people with disabilities provides businesses with a competitive advantage. Research has shown that people have a more favorable view of businesses that employ people with disabilities and would prefer to patronize these businesses. People with disabilities are also customers who spend billions of dollars annually on purchases. Disability-friendly businesses earn the patronage of individuals with disabilities, their families and their friends. In addition, some of the accommodations that benefit people with disabilities, such as automatic door openers, talking ATMs and accessible websites also benefit people without disabilities, and as our population ages, the need for greater accessibility also increases.

MYTH: Hiring workers who have disabilities increases workers' compensation insurance rates.

Insurance rates are based solely on the relative hazards of the operation and the organization's accident experience, not on whether an employer has hired workers with disabilities.

- 🌀 [Increasing numbers of individuals with disabilities are joining the workforce and transitioning off Social Security benefits](#)
- 🌀 [Disability-Dispelling the Myths](#)
- 🌀 [Information on hiring trends for individuals with disabilities](#)

An Inclusive Workplace

The **Job Accommodation Network's Disability Etiquette** resources offer guidance on interacting with people with disabilities.

<https://askjan.org/topics/disetiqa.cfm>

The **Toolkit for Establishing and Maintaining Successful Employee Resource Groups** is a 12-step guide for companies of any size or industry on how to start, implement and maintain disability employment resource groups. These are internal groups of employees with similar backgrounds, experiences or interests. They network, address common issues and concerns, and support each other.

<https://www.viscardicenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/The-Toolkit-for-Establishing-Groups.pdf>

The **Workplace Flexibility Toolkit** is a unique collection of resources to help employers adjust the time, location and manner in which employees work, in order to help them maintain better work/life balance.

Dol.gov/odep/workplaceflexibility

Financial Incentives & Tax Credits:

Although most employers do not consider financial incentives and tax credits as their main reason for hiring individuals with disabilities, employers that hire individuals who have a disability can trim their labor costs through several workforce and economic development programs. Employment-based tax credits may save your business money by cutting federal or state tax liability.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Targeted Groups

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit that benefits businesses that hire and retain workers with various barriers to employment.

Who May Be Eligible? All businesses are eligible. Companies that hire workers who have received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits within sixty (60) days prior to being hired, or who are referred to the company by a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency.

How It Works: Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA), the WOTC provides support to employers by reimbursing a percentage of a worker's wages for up to two years. The maximum amount of reimbursement varies based on the background of the individual hired.

 [Work Opportunity Tax Credit Fact Sheet](#)

Architectural/Transportation Tax Deduction

What is it? Businesses may take an annual deduction for expenses incurred to remove physical, structural and transportation barriers for persons with disabilities (Refer to IR Code Section 190, Barrier Removal).

What expenses are covered? The architectural/transportation tax deduction is available each year to businesses with qualified expenses. It can be used for a variety of costs to make a facility or public transportation vehicle, owned or leased for use in the business, more accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

Examples of tax deductions include:

- Providing accessible parking spaces, ramps and curb cuts
- Providing telephones, water fountains and restrooms that are accessible to persons using wheelchairs
- Making walkways at least 48 inches' wide
- Providing accessible entrances to buildings, including stairs and floors

What expenses are NOT covered? The tax deduction may not be used for expenses incurred for new construction, completion of renovation at a facility or on a public transportation vehicle, or for normal replacement of depreciable property.

What is the amount of tax deduction? The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) allows a tax deduction of up to \$15,000 per year for qualified architectural and transportation barrier removal expenses (Refer to IR Code Section 190, Barrier Removal).

How can this expenditure be deducted? Businesses seeking to take a deduction for expenditures made for architectural and transportation modifications should follow the instructions found in IRS Publication 907 and IRS Publication 535, entitled: Business Expenses. It is important to note that businesses may not take a deduction and a tax credit on the same expenditure (Refer to IR Code Section 44, Disabled Access Credit).

[Small Business Tax Credit](#)

What is it? Small businesses may take an annual tax credit for making their businesses accessible to persons with disabilities.

Who is eligible? Small businesses that in the previous year earned \$1 million or less in gross receipts or had 30 or fewer full-time employees are eligible for the Small Business Tax Credit.

What expenses are covered? The tax credit is available every year and can be used for a variety of costs such as:

- Sign language interpreters for employees/customers who have hearing impairments
- Readers for employees/customers who have visual impairments
- The purchase of adaptive equipment or the modification of equipment
- Printed materials in alternate formats (e.g., braille, audiotope, large print)
- The removal of architectural barriers in buildings or vehicles, and
- Other similar services (i.e., use of a job coach or a co-worker to provide support to an employee with a disability).

What expenses are NOT covered? The tax credit does not apply to the costs of new construction, and a building being modified must have been placed in service before November 6, 1990.

What is the amount of the tax credit? See link below

How can this credit be claimed? Businesses can claim the Disabled Access Credit on IRS Form 8826.

[IRS Tax Credits](#) (PDF)

- [Form 8826, Disabled Access Credit](#)
- [Publication 535, Business Expenses](#)
- [Form 8826, Disabled Access Credit](#) (PDF)
- [Form 5884, Work Opportunity Credit](#) (PDF)
- [Form 3800, General Business Credit](#) (PDF)
- [Instructions for Form 3800, General Business Credit](#)
- [Form 8850, Pre-Screening Notice and Certification Request for the Work Opportunity Credit](#) (PDF)
- [Instructions for Form 8850, Pre-Screening Notice and Certification Request for the Work Opportunity Credit](#)

Arizona Employment First Initiative

- 🌀 [Employment First Website](#)
- 🌀 [Association of People Supporting Employment First \(APSE\)](#)

Employer Network Resources:

- 🌀 [Networking Employment & Training Professionals Association \(NETPA\)](#)
- 🌀 [The Workforce Collaborative AZ](#)
- 🌀 [West Valley Employer Outreach](#)
- 🌀 [East Valley Employer Outreach](#)
- 🌀 [Networking Phoenix](#)
- 🌀 [Arizona Chambers of Commerce](#)



WHERE DO I FIND CANDIDATES?

Resources

- 🌀 Community
 - [ARIZONA@WORK](#)
 - [Arizona 211](#)
 - Arizona Job Corps
 - ◆ [Phoenix](#)
 - ◆ [Tucson](#)
- 🌀 Government
 - [Arizona State Department of Economic Security Department of Rehabilitation Services Administration \(DES/RSA\)](#)
 - ◆ [RSA Handbook](#)
- 🌀 Referral organizations
 - Service providers within the State of Arizona
 - [ARIZONA@WORK](#)
 - [Linkages](#)
 - [Disability Solutions Career Center](#)
- 🌀 Veterans Opportunities
 - [Arizona State Department of Veterans Affairs](#)



RECRUITMENT, HIRING AND RETENTION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL ABILITIES

Recommendations on how to develop a Diversified Recruitment System

1. Create non-traditional recruiting strategies by:

- Motivating current employees to recruit applicants with disabilities for existing employment opportunities.
- Posting job announcements on your website and consider including pictures of employees with disabilities.
- Remembering to identify your company as an “Equal Opportunity Employer” and add “Our Company Values Diversity” to any marketing collaterals.
- Listing job openings in publications and on websites that target applicants with disabilities.
- Attending local job fairs for job seekers with disabilities to gain a better understanding of the skills and abilities they bring to the workforce.
- Establishing a positive working relationship with local agencies/organizations, such as the Arizona Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, who provide employment assistance for job seekers with disabilities.

2. Consider options and flexibility by:

- Possibly providing internships/work experience placements for individuals with disabilities as a means of increasing the “comfort level” of staff and the potential applicant.
- Accessing information on reasonable accommodations and related tax incentives through local rehabilitation agencies/organizations.
- Considering telecommuting (virtual office), job sharing and other alternative employment options.
- Exploring accommodations (e.g. interpreters, readers, large print) when interviewing and testing applicants with disabilities.

3. Consider “outside the box” approaches, such as:

- Exploring modifications to existing workstations/procedures to enhance productivity and accommodate workers with disabilities.
- Considering mentoring partnerships as a way to make workers with disabilities feel at home.
- Providing an inclusive workplace environment that values individual differences in the workforce and makes them feel welcomed and accepted.
- Considering greater use of “cafeteria” style benefit packages to facilitate the hiring of persons with disabilities in flexible work arrangements.
- Modifying job descriptions that focus on essential duties.

4. Promote opportunities for workers with disabilities to update their skills, such as:

- Ensuring that workers with disabilities receive the same access to employer-provided training as their co-workers.
- Encouraging workers with disabilities to stay competitive via training in the increasingly technology-based economy.
- Reviewing company programs to address multiple learning styles, while avoiding one-size-fits-all approaches.
- Actively engaging with their own professional development.

5. Combat negative stereotypes by:

- Offering management level training and employee workshops to eliminate disability-related bias in the workplace.
- Ensuring that disability bias plays no part in hiring, training or retention decisions.
- Overlooking gaps in employment when considering interviews.
- Providing an environment that is welcoming for people with disabilities.
- Utilizing a person first language (person who has diabetes vs. diabetic; person with a disability vs. disabled).

6. Look at the person's job skills — not the person's disability:

- Simplifying displays the same objectivity required when interviewing a job applicant whose race, gender or sexual orientation differs from that of most or all of your present employees.
- Disability recruiting is diversity recruiting:
- Recruiting individuals who have a disability diversifies all your recruitment efforts.
- Including diversity and inclusion as part of your company's mission, strategies and practices, while making it a priority in recruitment practices.
- Leveraging the effects of diversity to achieve competitive business advantage(s).

Apprenticeships/Internship Programs

Apprenticeship Inclusion Models (AIM) is an initiative sponsored by the USDOL Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) to research, develop, test, and evaluate innovative strategies in existing apprenticeship programs that provide skills training to people with disabilities.

[Apprenticeship Toolkit](#)

A number of programs exist to connect students who have disabilities to internship opportunities. Such services offer companies the promise of a pipeline for future talent needs. Internships provide students with opportunities to get their foot in the door, explore various industries, gain new skills, apply knowledge to real-world situations, and learn about their own strengths and weaknesses and build a network. For intern opportunities, seek assistance from Career Services counselors at your local colleges and/or universities.

[Inclusive Internship Guide](#)

BUSINESS TO WORK NETWORK

Community Supports/Ancillary networks

🌀 [Society for Human Resource Management \(SHRM\)](#)

Six (6) steps to building an inclusive workplace:

1. Educate Your Leaders
2. Form an Inclusion Council
3. Celebrate Employee Differences
4. Listen to Employees
5. Hold More-Effective Meetings
6. Communicate Goals and Measure Progress

🌀 The **Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN)** provides free consultation and technical assistance for employers on diversity goals, recruitment and hiring, supervision and management, inclusive workplaces, and disability laws. [AskEarn.org](#) or 1-855-AskEARN (275 3276) (Voice/TTY)

🌀 The **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)** offers free, confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. The network is a service of the Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy. [AskJan.org](#) or 1-800-526-7234 (Voice); 1-877-781-9403 (TTY)

- 🌀 The **Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities** connects employers and pre-screened, highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities seeking internships or permanent employment. [AskEarn.org/g-wrp.cfm](https://www.askskill.org/g-wrp.cfm)

Tips/Strategies on creating an inclusive workforce/benefits of hiring an individual with a disability:

- 🌀 [ARIZONA@WORK: Recruit Talent](#)
- 🌀 [Untapped Arizona: Your Resource for an Inclusive Workforce](#)
- 🌀 The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) has resources that support businesses with hiring people with disabilities, specifically [“A Toolkit for Federal Agencies on Hiring People with Disabilities”](#)
- 🌀 [“Recruiting, Hiring, Retaining, and Promoting People with Disabilities – A Resource guide for Employers”](#)
- 🌀 [Getting to Equal: Disability Inclusion Advantage](#)
- 🌀 [The Business Case: Reasons to hire individuals with disabilities](#)
- 🌀 [The Sierra Group: Disability Recruiter Certification](#)

Success Stories

- 🌀 [Arizona Employment First Success Stories](#)
- 🌀 [“Voc Rehab Program Provides Yuma Man Resources to Succeed”](#)

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires an employer with fifteen (15) or more employees to provide reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities, unless it would cause undue hardship.

A change or modification that allows a person who has a disability to do the essential functions of a job and access equal employment opportunities.

- 🌀 Could be a change to the application process, hiring process, the way a job is usually done, the work environment, etc.

Job applicants or employees need to be able to perform the essential functions of their jobs with or without accommodations.

- 🌀 Essential job functions are the core responsibilities/tasks of the job.

Although most individuals with disabilities can apply for and perform jobs without any reasonable accommodations, workplace barriers may keep others from performing jobs which they could do with some form of accommodation. These barriers may be physical obstacles (such as inaccessible facilities or equipment), or they may be procedures or rules (such as rules concerning when work is performed, when breaks are taken, or how job tasks are performed). Reasonable accommodation removes workplace barriers for individuals with disabilities.

Providing reasonable accommodations for employees leads to many direct and indirect benefits. It can increase an employee’s productivity and eliminate the need to hire and train a new employee. This section of the toolkit can help you better understand reasonable accommodations, including their costs, uses and benefits.

The following resources provide additional information regarding reasonable accommodations:

🌀 [2019 MAG Interactive Map Viewer Training](#)

Arizona Resources

🌀 [AZTAP](#)

🌀 [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#)

🌀 [DB101: Job Supports and Accommodations](#)

Community Resources

🌀 Sign language interpretation

- [Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing \(ACDHH\)](#)

🌀 Service animals

- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\): Service Animals](#)

🌀 Technology

- [AzTap](#)
- [Assistive Technology \(A.T.\) Arizona](#)

Sample Accommodation Scenarios

Situation A

Concern:
Concentration

Solution:
Noise Cancelling
Headphones 

Reported benefit:
Allows employee to focus by
blocking out noise distractors

Reported cost: \$100

Situation B

Concern:
Memory & Organization

Solution: 
Checklist

Reported benefit:
Easy implementation to
incorporate into daily activities/
opportunities

Reported cost: \$0

Situation C

Concern:
Movement

Solution:
Modified Workspace 

Reported benefit:
Allows employee the ability for full
range movement and comfort in
their workspace.

Reported cost: \$200

VETERANS SERVICE SUPPORTS

America's Heroes at Work is a DOL initiative to give employers the tools they need to help employees affected by traumatic brain injuries and/or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). [Dol.gov/vets/ahaw/](https://dol.gov/vets/ahaw/)

The **National Resource Directory** is a service of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Department of Defense. It has an Employment Center with resources for employers. [Nrd.gov/](https://nrd.gov/)

DOL offers a [Veterans Hiring Toolkit](#) to help employers committed to including transitioning service members, veterans and wounded warriors in their recruitment and hiring initiatives. The toolkit offers step-by-step guidance on how to design and implement a recruitment strategy, create a welcoming and educated workforce, and promote an inclusive workplace to improve retention. [Americasheroesatwork.gov](https://americasheroesatwork.gov)

- 🌀 [Arizona Department of Veterans Services](#)
- 🌀 [Arizona Coalition for Military families](#)
- 🌀 [Veterans Administration](#)
- 🌀 [Veteran Resource Guide for Arizona Congressional District 3](#)
- 🌀 [DES: Where Veterans Can Get Help](#)
- 🌀 [American Legion](#)
- 🌀 [HIRE Vets Medallion Program](#)
- 🌀 [Veterans Employment Network](#)

MISCELLANEOUS RESOURCES

- 🌀 [US Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy](#)
- 🌀 [Americans With Disabilities Act](#)
 - ADA Information Line: 800-514-0301; <https://www.ada.gov/taprog.htm>
- 🌀 [Disability.Gov](#)
- 🌀 [Institute for Community Inclusion](#)
- 🌀 [National Center on Workforce and Disability \(NCWD\)](#)
- 🌀 [Accenture Consulting](#)

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