



BEST PRACTICES CHECKLIST

The following Checklist was compiled using the findings and review structure of the EEOC's Task Force that was assigned to study "best" equal employment opportunity policies, programs, and practices of private sector employers; the Disability Employment 101 Guide updated in 2007 by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services within the U.S. Department of Education; and the best practices of award winners in ODEP's Circle of Champions.

Quickly completing this checklist can help you to see where you are in the process of being a disability friendly company and where you might need to improve. The PA Business Leadership Network (PA BLN) is a resource that can provide you with assistance in learning about the best practices mentioned in this checklist and in meeting your goals.

(1) Inclusion Practices -The "inclusion practices" category embraces any other policies, programs, or practices not readily identifiable in the previous five groups.

- Gaining Support- Securing commitment from top levels of leadership within a company
 - Is the CEO committed to a disability-friendly workplace?
 - Do people with disabilities serve on the board?
 - Are workers with disabilities employed at all skill levels in the workforce, including senior management positions?

- Access For All-Provide accessible facilities and services.
 - Strive for Universal Design when building, remodeling and/or purchasing equipment
 - Are buildings, parking areas, work spaces and communication systems accessible to people with disabilities?
 - Is your website and application process accessible?
 - Is the entrance to the building on an even, hard surface without steps?
 - If the accessible entrance is not immediately apparent, are there directional signs?
 - Are there handicapped parking signs and spaces with necessary access space for vans with lifts?

- Does the building have accessible restrooms, phones and water fountains?
- Customer Inclusion-Ensure that products, programs, services, and information are available to customers with disabilities or age-related limitations.
 - Are your products and services marketed to customers with disabilities?
 - Do people with disabilities purchase your goods and services?

(2) Workplace Inclusion - The focus of "workplace inclusion" is on disability accommodation programs, pay equity, insurance, employee benefits, and work-life and disability-friendly policies and practices.

- Educate all staff on disability issues.
 - Does new staff orientation include disability awareness training?
 - Have coworkers been trained to know how to welcome workers with disabilities?
 - Do coworkers know who to contact for questions regarding working with employees with disabilities?
- Create a formal Accommodation Procedure. Do employees and managers know what to do when an accommodation is needed?
- Consider a Centralized Accommodation Budget
- Include people with disabilities in diversity recruitment goals
- Develop ways to measure success and holding managers accountable.
- Review corporate policies, procedures and practices. Do they specifically mention the word "disability" as part of diversity efforts?
- Offer flexible and adaptable work practices.
- Utilize assistive technologies for meetings, including real-time captioning and video conferencing that benefit employees with and without disabilities.
- Include a statement in invitations that requests attendees to share accommodations that will be needed for participation.
- Form a disability support group.
 - Do employees with disabilities meet to discuss disability employment issues?
 - Does this group have authority to make recommendations to management?
 - Is all staff aware of this group and the contributions it makes to corporate success?
- Encourage staff to volunteer in the community.

- Is staff encouraged to build relationships with community service organizations for people with disabilities?
- Does staff make regular visits to high schools to inform administrators, teachers and students with disabilities about open houses or job trends in your industry?

(3) Recruitment and Hiring -The focus of "recruitment and hiring" is on affirmative recruitment programs designed to create a diverse workforce, such as internships, recruitment strategies, and education and training programs used for hiring.

- Project a disability-friendly image to attract candidates and customers with disabilities.
 - Build active relationships with disability employment groups –PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, The Sierra Group/One More Way Project; AHEDD, Bender Consulting Services, DOL-supported Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network (EARN), associations for professionals with disabilities, a free service that connects employers with skilled job candidates,....
 - Join the PA BLN- Membership is free, but it is PRICELESS
 - Post job announcements in disability-related publications, web sites and job fairs
 - Contact BOTH career centers and disability services at colleges and universities when vacancies arise
 - Attend employment fairs for candidates with disabilities or target students at colleges with known populations of students with disabilities, such as Gallaudet University (www.gallaudet.edu) , Edinboro University, and theNational Technical Institute for the Deaf (www.ntid.rit.edu).
- Train interviewers to focus on the candidates' skills and abilities rather than on their disabilities.
- Establish summer internship and mentoring programs targeted at youth with disabilities.
- Participate in current Disability Mentoring Day events or start your own.
- Provide continuing information on disability issues.
 - Is staff familiar with legislation pertaining to disability issues?
 - Is disability information provided routinely in the company newsletter or on an intranet site?

(4) Promotion and Career Advancement - The focus of "promotion and career advancement" is on programs that have eliminated barriers to the advancement of persons with disabilities. Such programs as mentoring, education and training for

purposes of promotion, and career enhancement initiatives were considered in this group.

- Are training materials available in alternate formats such as large print, Braille and captioned?
- Do employees with disabilities serve as mentors for new hires who do not have disabilities?
- Do employees with disabilities routinely participate in employer-sponsored training opportunities? If not, has this issue been brought before a disability support group for recommendations?
 - Are procedures in place to promote qualified employees with disabilities to management and supervisory positions?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO UTILIZE IN DETERMINING BEST PRACTICES

- The **New Freedom Initiative (NFI) Circle of Champions (CoC)** is the distinguished group of U.S. businesses that have received the Secretary of Labor's New Freedom Initiative Award for innovative and proactive efforts to recruit, hire, and promote people with disabilities. The CoC participants work with ODEP to help inform disability employment policy by sharing proven business strategies that result in hiring, retaining and advancing the careers of talented employees who have disabilities. Visit www.dol.gov/odep to learn more about the Circle of Champions: Innovators in Employing All Americans and other successful strategies.
- Also visit<http://www.atia.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3489> for **Roadmaps** that can affirm current successful business policies and practices and identify new strategic policies and practices. These Roadmaps are the result of a September 24, 2007 event for Business Dialogue on Accessible Technology and Disability Employment that was held in Orlando, Florida. The Business Dialogue was sponsored by the Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) and the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN) with the participation of the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, and the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of the Business Dialogue was to provide cutting-edge business leaders and decision-makers with the opportunity to develop consensus Roadmaps to enhance the hiring, retention, and advancement of persons with disabilities and others through accessible technology.
- **Disability Employment 101** is a comprehensive analysis of hiring employees with disabilities that includes information about how to find qualified workers with disabilities, how to put disability and employment research into practice and how to model what other businesses have done to successfully integrate individuals with disabilities into the workforce. Visit the following link to download the publication....
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/products/employmentguide/index.html>