

Consider the skills and expertise that an individual brings to the job, not his or her disability.

HOW TO ATTRACT & RETAIN EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

Use Non-Traditional Recruiting Strategies

- Motivate your employees to recruit applicants with disabilities for existing employment opportunities.
- Post job announcements on your website and consider including pictures of employees with disabilities.
- Remember to identify your company as an “Equal Opportunity Employer” and add “Our Company Values Diversity.”
- List job openings in publications and on websites that target applicants with disabilities.
- Attend local job fairs for job seekers with disabilities to gain a better understanding of the skills and abilities they bring to the workforce.
- Establish a positive working relationship with local agencies and organizations, such as the Montana Vocational Rehabilitation Program, that provide employment assistance for job seekers with disabilities.

Consider Options & Flexibility

- Consider providing internships and work-experience placements for people with disabilities as a way to increase the “comfort level” of staff and potential applicants.
- Access information on reasonable accommodations and related tax incentives through local rehabilitation agencies and organizations.
- Consider telecommuting, job sharing, and other alternative employment options.
- Explore accommodations (such as interpreters, readers, large print) when interviewing and testing applicants with disabilities.

Consider ‘Outside the Box’ Approaches

- Explore modifications to existing work stations and procedures to reduce injuries, enhance productivity, and accommodate employees with disabilities.
- Consider mentoring partnerships to help make workers with disabilities feel at home.
- Consider greater use of “cafeteria” style benefit packages to facilitate the hiring of people with disabilities in flexible work arrangements.

Promote Opportunities for Workers with Disabilities to Update Skills

- Ensure that workers with disabilities get the same access to employer-provided training as their co-workers.
- Encourage workers with disabilities to stay competitive via training in the increasingly technology-based economy.
- Review company programs to address multiple learning styles. Avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.

Combat Negative Stereotypes

- Offer management level training and employee workshops to eliminate disability-related bias in the workplace.
- Ensure that disability bias plays no part in decisions about hiring, training, or retaining employees.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

ADA Information Line

800-514-0301 (voice) or 800-514-0383 (TTY)

The U.S. Department of Justice offers technical assistance on the ADA Standards for Accessible Design and other ADA provisions applying to businesses, nonprofit service agencies, and state and local government programs. It also provides information on how to file ADA complaints. More information is available online at www.ada.gov.

Disability Resources Inc.

www.disabilityresources.org

This nonprofit organization disseminates information about books, pamphlets, magazines, newsletters, videos, databases, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, telephone hotlines, and online services that provide free, inexpensive or hard-to-find information to help people with disabilities live independently.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

www.eeoc.gov

The EEOC enforces federal laws prohibiting job discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The commission's website provides a wealth of facts, policies, laws, guidance and other information related to discrimination based on disability. Call toll-free 800-669-4000 (voice) or 800-669-6820 (TTY).

Job Accommodations Network

www.jan.wvu.edu

JAN is a free consulting service of the U.S. Department of Labor designed to increase the employability of people with disabilities by: 1) providing individualized worksite accommodations solutions, 2) providing technical assistance regarding the ADA and other disability related legislation, and 3) educating callers about self-employment options. Call toll-free 800-526-7234 (voice) or 877-781-9403 (TTY).

Montana Department of Labor and Industry

www.ourfactsyourfuture.org

The Workforce Services Division of DLI offers assistance to Montanans with disabilities who are looking for work, as well as to employers who want to understand the rights and protections granted to individuals with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Call 406-444-2430 or, toll-free, 800-541-3904.

Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services

www.dphhs.mt.gov/dsd

The Disability Services Division of DPHHS provides services to Montanans with disabilities to help them live, work and fully participate in their communities. Among those services are vocational rehabilitation, case management, a variety of employment outcome-related services, telephone relay service and equipment, and specialized services for blind and visually impaired individuals. Call 406-444-2590 (voice/TTY) or, toll-free, 877-296-1197.

Montana Advocacy Program

www.mtadv.org

MAP, also known as Disability Rights Montana, is a nonprofit corporation that administers eight protection and advocacy programs and one private program to support the rights of Montanans with disabilities. Call 406-449-2344 (voice/TDD) or, toll-free, 800-245-4743.

MonTECH

montech.ruralinstitute.umt.edu

A program of the University of Montana Rural Institute, Montana's Technology Related Program for People with Disabilities, or MonTECH, helps people find the necessary assistive devices for reasonable accommodation to help them get employment. Call 406-243-5751 or, toll-free, 800-732-0323.

Rocky Mountain Disability & Business Technical Assistance Center

www.adainformation.org

The DBTAC provides information and basic to advanced level seminars on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and accessible information technology to Colorado, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota. Call 719-444-0268 (voice/TTY) or, toll-free, 800-949-4232 (voice/TTY).



EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

A SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR EMPLOYERS

Summer 2007

Dear Montana Employer:

People with disabilities are just like other workers: They want to do a good job, they appreciate constructive supervision, they enjoy new challenges, and they want to get ahead. They can be a valuable asset to your workplace.

And yet, people with disabilities face many barriers to employment, in part because of misconceptions about their skills and abilities to do a job well.

Please take a moment to review the information in this brochure regarding the myths and facts about workers with disabilities. Then fill out the self-assessment survey to see if your workplace is “friendly” to people with disabilities.

We hope you will explore the potential of workers with disabilities. They have so much to offer, both to you and to your clients and customers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Schweitzer".

Brian Schweitzer
Governor of Montana

Myths can nourish negative attitudes toward people with disabilities. They usually stem from a lack of experience and can be barriers to equality in employment. Here are some of the most common myths, along with the facts that tell the real story.

MYTHS & FACTS

ABOUT EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

MYTH: Hiring employees with disabilities increases workers compensation insurance rates.

FACT: Insurance rates are based solely on the relative hazards of the job and the organization's accident experience, not on whether employees have disabilities.

MYTH: Employees with disabilities miss more work than employees without disabilities.

FACT: Studies by firms such as DuPont show that employees with disabilities are not absent any more than employees without disabilities.

MYTH: People with disabilities are unable to meet performance standards, making them a bad employment risk.

FACT: In 1990, DuPont conducted a survey of 811 employees with disabilities and found that 90 percent rated average or better in job performance compared to 95 percent for employees without disabilities.

MYTH: It's expensive to accommodate employees with disabilities.

FACT: Most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations, and the cost for those who do is minimal or much lower than many employers believe.

MYTH: Employees with disabilities are more likely to have accidents on the job than employees without disabilities.

FACT: In the 1990 DuPont study, the safety records of both groups were identical.

MYTH: It's impossible to determine a fair salary range for employees with disabilities.

FACT: This is simple. Employees with disabilities should receive prevailing wages and benefits based on productivity and job performance.

MYTH: There is nothing I can do if an individual with disabilities is not the right fit or doesn't work out in my organization.

FACT: This is a statement that most employers are afraid to articulate. What they're really saying is, "I can't fire an employee with disabilities if he or she doesn't work out." The intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is to ensure that people with disabilities are given the same opportunities and treatment as everybody else.

Employers are not expected to go easy on employees with disabilities. If an employee is not doing the job satisfactorily, he or she should be coached, counseled, disciplined and, if necessary, terminated based on established policies. All employees should be held accountable to the standards and expectations of their employment.

EMPLOYER ASSESSMENT

IS YOUR WORKPLACE DISABILITY FRIENDLY?

Take this simple assessment to find out if you offer an environment that is attractive to workers with disabilities. Please check items that apply to your organization.

Recruitment

- We clearly state on our job announcements that we are an Equal Opportunity Employer.
- Our job descriptions clearly identify the essential and marginal functions of all positions we are trying to fill.
- We encourage applicants to request accommodations that provide them with equal access to all phases of the recruitment process.
- We are familiar with organizations and agencies that help job seekers who have disabilities.

Employee Training

We provide flexible training opportunities, including:

- Mentoring
- Job rotation
- On-the-job coaching
- Peer training
- Internships

We provide equal access to company-sponsored training and social activities for all employees, including those with disabilities:

- Newsletters/notices
- Break rooms/lounges
- Career advancement training
- Specific skill training

Hiring, Retention, Evaluation & Promotion

We provide all new hires and job candidates with the following information addressing issues of particular interest to employees with disabilities:

- Workplace accommodations
- Flexible benefits
- Alternative work schedules

We periodically review our organizational policies and practices as they relate to employees with disabilities:

- Recruitment
- Hiring
- Training
- Evaluation
- Promotion
- Termination

We conduct "accessibility audits" of our organization to help identify possible barriers to:

- Physical access to facilities
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Promotional opportunities
- Training for employees with disabilities

We educate managers, supervisors, and interviewers on:

- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Workplace accommodations
- Disability stereotypes
- Benefits of hiring workers with disabilities

Compensation & Benefits

We offer alternatives to full-time employment:

- Part-time employment
- Job sharing
- Flextime
- We offer similar or prorated benefits for part-time employees.

The following proactive return-to-work policies and practices are in place:

- Early intervention
- Case management
- Alternate duty assignments
- Supervisor training

Accommodations

We talk about assessing and redesigning jobs for employees with disabilities with:

- Managers
- Supervisors
- Lead workers

We provide the following accommodations to help employees perform their jobs:

- Ergonomic work stations/keyboards
- Flexible work stations
- Other _____

How Did You Do?

Add up your checkmarks. If your total was:

- 1 – 11 You will have trouble attracting workers with disabilities.
- 12 – 22 Your workplace is somewhat friendly to workers with disabilities.
- 23 – 33 Your workplace is mostly friendly to workers with disabilities.
- 34 – 44 Congratulations! Your workplace will attract employees with disabilities.

To improve your score, take advantage of the resources listed on the back page of this brochure.