

Recruiting Students with Disabilities for Youth Apprenticeships

Recruiting and supporting students with disabilities in apprenticeships is a crucial step in growing a consortium and creating a more inclusive Youth Apprenticeship (YA) program. Students and other employees with disabilities account for a large portion our current and future workforce who are qualified and eager to participate. Here are a few things you can do to help better engage students with disabilities.

Top Ten Tips for Success

1. Involve the potential YA student in YA recruitment process
2. Practice with mock interviews
3. Build relationships (Chamber of Commerce, Civic groups, etc.)
4. Match worker skills to business needs
5. Develop a good "elevator" speech
6. Conduct informational interviews (informal meetings with potential employers where students can get a feel for the industry without the stress of a hiring decision)
7. Use a variety of strategies (e.g. word of mouth, online job board, newspaper)
8. Develop a thought-out action plan with the student
9. Disclose disability related information only as necessary
10. Never give up!

Dispelling Myths About Disability in the Workplace

MYTH: All people with disabilities require job accommodations.

FACT: Studies have shown that less than one-quarter of employees with disabilities need accommodations.

MYTH: The ADA forces employers to hire unqualified individuals with disabilities.

FACT: Applicants who are unqualified for a job cannot claim discrimination under the ADA. Under the ADA, to be protected from discrimination in hiring, an individual with a disability must be qualified, which means he or she must meet all requirements for a job and be able to perform its essential functions with or without reasonable accommodations. No accommodation must be provided if it would result in an undue hardship on the employer.

MYTH: Providing accommodations for people with disabilities is expensive.

FACT: The majority of workers with disabilities do not need accommodations to perform their jobs, and for those who do, the cost is usually minimal. According to the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), a service from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, 57% of accommodations cost absolutely nothing to make, while the rest typically cost only \$500 or less.

MYTH: I can't fire or discipline an employee with a disability.

FACT: There are no special procedures for firing or disciplining employees with disabilities. However, there are laws in place, such as the Human Rights Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, that serve to protect the rights of the individuals with disabilities by providing equal access in the areas of employment, transportation, public accommodations, public services, and telecommunications.

References: <https://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/ada.htm>

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