

respect
ability
FIGHTING STIGMAS. ADVANCING OPPORTUNITIES.

Fostering Disability-Inclusive Cultures and Workplaces

NACDL | April 25, 2024



Today's Facilitators



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Who We Are

RespectAbility is a diverse, disability-led nonprofit.

Our mission is to **fight stigmas and advance opportunities** so people with disabilities can **fully participate** in all aspects of community.



Today's Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, attendees will be able to:

1. Identify 3 action steps they can take to foster inclusive employee development and advancement opportunities
2. Articulate the basics of reasonable accommodations processes for employees with disabilities
3. Support implementation of disability inclusion efforts within organizations, offices, agencies, and/or firms
4. Highlight the importance of intentional and inclusive marketing and communications practices as part of a larger disability inclusion strategy
5. Name at least 3 resources that can support them in providing reasonable accommodations and fostering disability-inclusive cultures and workplaces

Share in the Chat:
How do you make a
workplace **inclusive**?

Steps to Creating an Inclusive Workplace



1. Recruit candidates from a diverse pool, including candidates with disabilities
2. Create a welcoming workplace where employees feel comfortable disclosing their disabilities and requesting accommodations
3. Ensure that all events and social media posts are accessible and inclusive of people with disabilities, to attract diverse staff, board members and volunteers

Partner with and Learn from Groups Led by People with Disabilities

- People with disabilities know what solutions work for them!
- Now we must move toward a model that focuses on inclusivity, intersectionality, and eliminating the barriers created by societal choices
- These solutions must be led by people with diverse identities, backgrounds, and disabilities



Tips for Organizations and Employers

Be Transparent About Inclusion

The message that all people are of equal value and must be respected and treated fairly, must be communicated by the leadership of your organization.

Attract clients with disabilities by making your efforts towards inclusion readily available and easy to access.



How Can Your Organization Address This?



The ABA recommends that organizations:

- 1. Acknowledge** the issues
- 2. Assess** your organization's culture, philosophy, and history
- 3. Define** your organization's goals
- 4. Evaluate** your organization's policies, protocols, and practices
- 5. Invest** in education, training, guidance, and support
- 6. Change** your policies and practices
- 7. Track** (progress)

Set SMARTIE Disability Inclusion Goals

- SMARTIE: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound, Inclusive, and Equitable
- Key goals can include using free accessibility tools and practices to ensure online events are screen reader accessible and have captions
- An easy-to-meet goal is ensuring all in-person events are in fully accessible meeting spaces
 - Ask clients about any disability accommodation needs



Recruit Diverse Talent

Benefits of Hiring People with Disabilities

GETTING TO EQUAL:
**THE DISABILITY
INCLUSION
ADVANTAGE**



- Followed 140 US companies from 2015-2018
- 45 Inclusion Champions, 95 peer companies

[Read the full study online!](#)

Over four years, the Champions who embraced the talent of workers with disabilities **vastly outperformed their peers.**

They had:

- **2X higher income**
- **30% higher economic profit margin**
- **Up to 30% less staff turnover**

* Study completed by [Accenture](#), [Disability:IN](#) and the [American Association of People with Disabilities](#)



Recruit Talent with Disabilities

- People with disabilities are loyal to our employers and are used to solving problems creatively
- People with disabilities are a largely untapped talent pool

Resources Are Available To Teach You What You Don't Know



If you are new on your disability inclusion journey, the questions of what to do next may seem daunting.

Yet people with disabilities have been succeeding in the workplace for decades, and there are resources to help.

These include:

- [RespectAbility](#), Best Practices for Employers
- [TAPAbility](#), which can source talent
- [AskJan.org](#), which can problem solve inclusive employment questions for free

Disability Inclusion at Your Organization

Volunteer

- Opportunities for schools, summer jobs, internships, disability service providers
- Leadership roles like boards and committees

Staff

- Competitive integrated employment
- Hire and promote

Having employees with disabilities at all levels of the organization is one way that nonprofits can improve the accessibility of their programs and better understand the ways that disability intersects with the mission

Lived Experience Makes for an Incredible Board!



RespectAbility Board members consist of a diverse group of thought leaders in the entertainment, policy, corporate, nonprofit, and faith inclusion worlds. Their varied experiences and perspectives make for stronger decisions on the direction of the organization.

Representation at RespectAbility

RespectAbility is a “Nothing about us, Without us Organization.”

Over the last two years, over **47%** of hires represent non-white communities and at least **85%** have a disability.

Organization Level + Number	People of Color	White	Disability	LGBTQIA+	Women/ Non-Binary	Men/Male-Identifying
Board (34)	53%	47%	52%	6%	52%	48%
Staff (25)	38%	63%	80%	45.8%	56%	44%
Senior Staff (7)	43%	57%	71%	43%	57%	43%
Fellows (229 alumni)	46%	54%	90%	22%	62%	38%

How to Recruit, Accommodate, and Retain Diverse Talent

Create a Welcoming and Inclusive Culture

- Eliminate ableist and discriminatory language from job descriptions
 - Physical components (e.g., being able to lift 30 pounds) may only be in a job description if actually an essential function of the job
- Encourage questions regarding accessibility and disclosure of disability
 - Respect the fact that disclosure is highly personal and may take time
- Don't micromanage the completion of tasks or when tasks get completed
 - Important to evaluate what work really needs to be done synchronously
 - Allowing employees to set their own schedules allows them to [prioritize self-care](#)
- Encourage senior managers to be open about who they are
 - Have leadership talk about and acknowledge importance of accessibility and disability inclusion

Review Your DEIA Practices

1. Employment and volunteer practices, encompassing but not limited to accommodations, talent recruitment, and retention policies.

2. Facilities and events, use only accessible spaces and practices and promoting universal design, benefiting older adults and those with disabilities.

3. Online Accessibility, ensuring websites and social media comply with the most recent Web Content Accessibility Guidelines so all people can benefit and participate in your work and success.

4. Are we at the table?: Whether people with disabilities are centered in decision making around issues that impact them.



Support Diverse Candidates

- Support disabled employees by establishing employee resource groups (ERGs) and prioritizing accessibility in all ERG and Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) events
- Encourage seeking and using accommodations to help one be more successful
- Check in with each person to see what they need
 - Remove physical and other barriers
 - Screen readers, captions, wheelchair accessibility



It is important to always ask employees what they need to thrive in your workplace.

Create An Access and Communication Policy

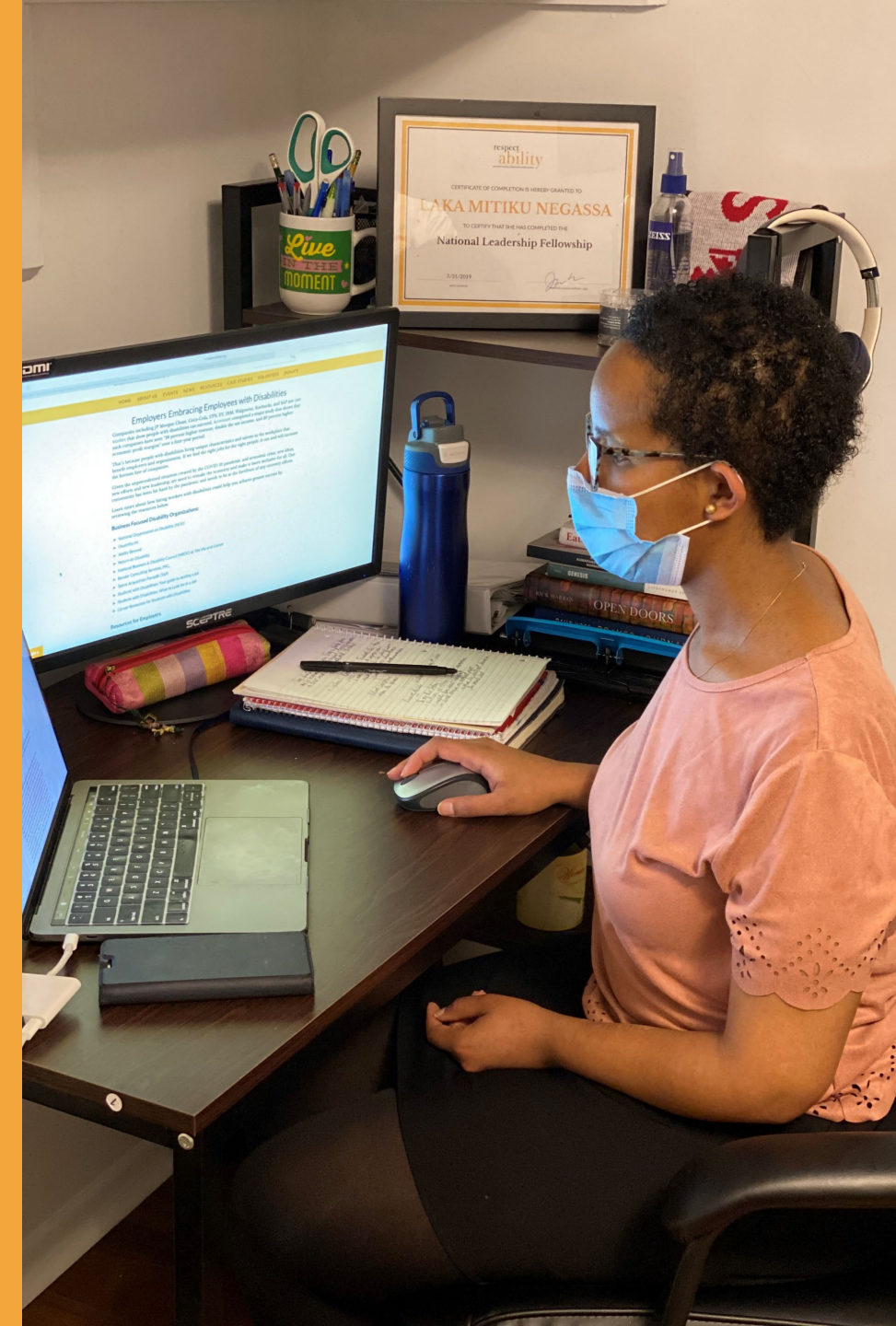
- Process for requesting/providing accommodations and auxiliary aids and services
 - Employees
 - Non-employees/public
- Point of contact in the agency/responsible party
- Preferred contractors/interpreters
- Grievance procedure
- Ongoing training/orientation for new employees

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Employees with disabilities are entitled to **reasonable accommodations**

Reasonable accommodations are **modifications or adjustments** to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done

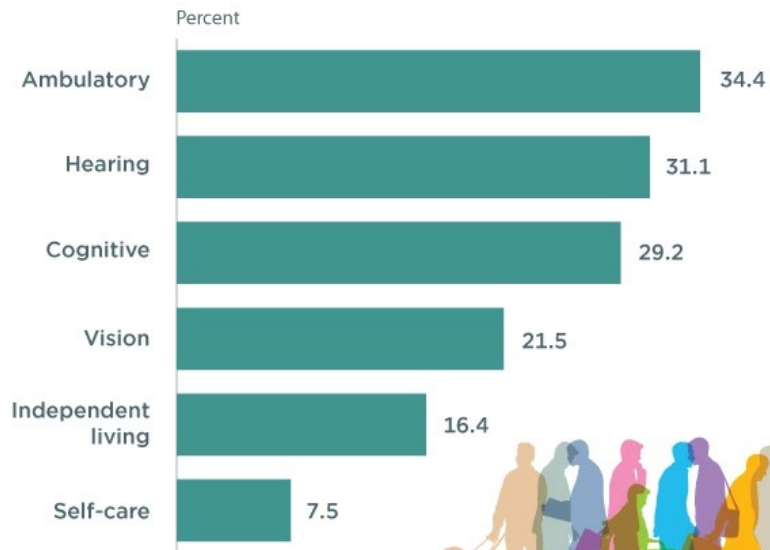
These modifications or adjustments **help disabled people perform the essential functions** of their jobs and/or create equal opportunity in employment



Defining Disability

Types of Disabilities

Type of Disability Among Workers With a Disability: 2017



Note: The universe is workers ages 16 and older. Some workers may have more than one disability.



The ADA defines disability as “**a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.**”

Major life activities include such activities as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

Requesting Accommodations

- Typically starts with a request from an employee, but best practice is to **proactively offer accommodations to all employees**
- **Individualized inquiry**, taking into account personal preferences
- **Interactive process** between an employee and employer to find the right solution



What Are Examples of Accommodations or Supports?

- Flexible working hours
- Scheduled or frequent breaks
- Captioning or CART
- Large-print materials
- ASL interpretation
- Changes to team communication practices (i.e., using Zoom phone messaging over email)
- Assistive technology/software
- Durable medical equipment



Sample Accommodations Employees Should Know About

- Flexible scheduling
 - Work optimally during hours of increased attentiveness
- Modified break schedule
 - Mental rest to refocus/reorient
- Rest area/private space
 - Space to rest, take medication or perform daily health activities
- Give clear, objective, and timely feedback
- Use assistive technologies such as closed captioning ([zoom automatic captions](#))

Universal design – these accommodations would benefit everybody

Provide Reasonable Accommodations

- Accommodations or “productivity enhancers” will help employers unlock the potential of their employees
- Ensure equal opportunity in the application process
- Enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of a job
- Make it possible for an employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment
- An employer is not required to make an accommodation if it would impose an "undue hardship" on the operation of the employer's business
 - Consider nature and cost of accommodation with respect to size, resources, nature, and structure of the employer's operation

Share in the Chat:
How do employees request
reasonable accommodations
at your workplace?

Inclusive and Accessible Marketing Practices

Make It Accessible

- If something is accessible, your target audience can:
 - **Participate**
 - **Understand**
 - **Engage or take action**
- Common types of access needs
 - Physical/mobility access
 - Sensory access (auditory, visual, olfactory, and environmental stimulation)
 - Cognitive access
 - Communication access, including language considerations

Website Accessibility

- Screen readers
 - Alt text
 - Forms and buttons
- Captions on videos
 - Subtitles only reflect what is being spoken.
 - Captions go a step further by also including non-spoken information including [laughter], [applause] and [music], as well as environmental sounds.




Language Matters!



- Some people prefer person-first language – “person with a disability” – and others prefer identity-first language – “disabled person”
- Avoid outdated terms like “handicapped,” “crippled” or the “R” word
- Ask the person what language they prefer and respect their preference
- Just remember: **A-T-P!** Ask the Person!

Continue Your Disability Inclusion Journey

Resources



Webinars

- Accessibility and Disability Etiquette
- Employment
- Advocacy
- Hollywood
- Safety and Criminal Justice
- Faith Inclusion

Disability Training and Consulting Bureau

Free resources and past webinar recordings available at www.RespectAbility.org/Resources

Nothing Without Us.



Disability Training & Consulting Bureau

Want to customize a training for your team? Email JakeS@RespectAbility.org for more information.



For More Information

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