

Shaping Tomorrow's Workforce

Including Talents of Young People with Disabilities



Thanks to advancements in technology, young people with disabilities can do virtually any job that someone without a disability can perform. Expanding your workplace to include young people with and without disabilities is a positive way to help shape the future workforce—and benefit your business.

Why hire young people with disabilities? In addition to enhancing your workforce, recruiting and hiring young people with disabilities makes good business sense. Youth bring fresh new perspectives on strategies for meeting business challenges and achieving success. Hiring young people with disabilities is also a valuable way to reach out to an important market base. According to the 2005 American Community Survey (ACS), there are approximately 2.4 million young people with disabilities (ages 16-24) in the United States.

Finding Qualified Candidates

While many employers indicate that they want to include young people with disabilities in their internships and hiring efforts, they don't always know where to recruit them. The answer is fairly simple. Young people with disabilities can generally be found everywhere that other youth are found, such as at college career fairs, through job search Web sites, at the mall, or at the student union hanging out with their friends. Because they also are reading and writing blogs, exploring Web sites, and connecting to listservs to search for jobs, you can increase the likelihood of grabbing their attention by explicitly stating your desire to recruit and hire people with disabilities in your vacancy announcements.



Where to Find Young People for Internships and Permanent Jobs

Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP)

www.wrp.gov

Co-sponsored by the U. S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), and the U. S. Department of Defense, the WRP is a recruitment and referral program that connects federal sector, private, and non-profit employers nationwide with highly motivated postsecondary students and recent graduates with disabilities who are ready to prove their abilities in summer or permanent jobs.

Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network (EARN)

www.earnworks.com

Funded by ODEP, EARN is a free, Web-based service that connects employers looking for quality employees with skilled job candidates. The Web site is a one-stop source for disability employment information, including recruiting services, tools and resources, employer success stories, and the business case for hiring people with disabilities.

National Youth Leadership Network (NYLN)

www.nyln.org

The NYLN promotes leadership development, education, employment, independent living, and health and wellness among young leaders representing the diversity of race, ethnicity and disability in the U. S. NYLN's large listserv of young people with disabilities can be a ready distribution mechanism for your job announcements.

Kids As Self Advocates (KASA)

www.fvkasa.org

KASA members serve as advisors to the more than 40,000 members of Family Voices across the country and organizations and agencies interested in promoting youth involvement and leadership. KASA's large listserv of young people with disabilities can be a ready distribution mechanism for your job announcements.

Online Job Search Web Sites

Most of the Web-based job search engines (i.e., Monster.com and Careerbuilder.com) have a section of their Web sites that focus on "diversity jobs." Depending on the Web site, the information can vary from a list of employers who have a positive track record hiring people of diverse backgrounds to a listing of open positions at companies that are encouraging applicants of diverse backgrounds.

Employers can search resumes of applicants who have chosen to self-identify as being from a diverse background on most of these Web sites. These diversity searches are not always disability specific.

Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)

www.ahead.org

AHEAD is a professional association committed to the full participation of persons with disabilities in postsecondary education. Its Web site provides contact information for Disability Services Advisors at colleges and universities across the nation, which can be useful to employers seeking job candidates in a specific area. Many Disability Services Offices keep a list of students and recent graduates with disabilities who are looking for employment.

Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD)

www.cosdonline.org

Through its Career Gateway Database, COSD provides a Web-based forum where employers can search for qualified candidates, and graduating college and university students can post their resumes.

American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)

www.aapd.com

AAPD is the largest national nonprofit cross-disability member organization in the United States, representing the more than 56 million Americans with disabilities. To reach out to both youth and adult job seekers with disabilities, email your job announcement to AAPD; they will post your company's name, position location, position title, and a link to your position description on their Web site.



Don't Forget Accessibility

Another important strategy, which will also assist you in your broader recruitment efforts, is to ensure that your company's online information and job applications are available in alternative accessible formats. For example, providing information in larger print or in simplified language may assist you in reaching not only young people with and without disabilities, but also older workers and individuals with limited English language proficiency. It is also important to ensure that your online application processes provide sufficient time flexibility so as not to screen out potentially qualified workers.

The key to making online job information accessible to people with disabilities is Web page design. In order to consider the accessibility needs of the end user, there are several design tips and validation services available to webmasters. For a summary of these, visit Tips for Designing Accessible Web Pages at www.jan.wvu.edu/media/web-pages.html.

Free Information on Accommodations for Employees with Disabilities

Job Accommodation Network (JAN) www.jan.wvu.edu

Funded by ODEP, JAN is a free consulting service that provides individualized accommodation solutions for the workplace, technical assistance on the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability-related legislation, education about self-employment options for people with disabilities, and research findings on workplace accommodations.



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