



An employer's guide to employing someone with disability

A message from Minister Stone

Australia's workforce is ageing and in the next five years, Workforce Tomorrow research predicts there will be a labour shortage of around 195 000 people.

Employers can begin to address this issue today, by taking advantage of Australia's untapped workforce—which includes people with disability who have the capacity to work and want to find a job.

People in this potential workforce are often characterised by a high degree of dedication and commitment to their role. Many employers have not previously engaged a person with disability and you may not know how to take those first steps.

I would like to highlight the Australian Government resources available to help employers recruit a person with disability and the range of workplace training and support available.

There are organisations that can help these employees gain extra skills for a particular job and provide support to you and your other employees to ensure the ongoing success of your business. Financial assistance for workplace modifications is just one of the options available to you as are employment services providers such as the Disability Employment Network and Job Network.

I commend this new guide to you as an employer. It brings together information on the range of Australian Government resources available to help you successfully employ more people with disability.

Our goal is to help your business thrive, whilst giving all Australians further opportunity to contribute to our economic future.

Dr Sharman Stone
Minister for Workforce Participation



**Job Network
Disability
Employment Network
JobAccess
Vocational
Rehabilitation Services**

AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

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As an employer, a major concern when recruiting staff is getting the right person for the job. Sometimes the right person will be someone with disability—which may or may not be visible.

Like all employees, people with disability can bring a range of skills, talents and abilities to the workplace, working in all sorts of jobs with many holding tertiary and trade qualifications. Some hold senior managerial positions, while others are employed in manual or technical jobs.

The majority of employers who have employed someone with disability say that they would be happy to continue doing so. However, some employers haven't had the opportunity to recruit staff with disability and say that they're unsure about how to go about tapping into this valuable pool of labour.

This guide explains the range of Australian Government services and incentives available to help employers who employ people with disability or are thinking of doing so.

What is Job Network?

Job Network is Australia's largest government funded employment service with around 1000 recruitment offices operating in a highly competitive environment.

Each year, Job Network members connect over half a million job seekers to employers across a wide range of industries and occupations.

Your local Job Network member can provide your business with:

- professional recruitment advice
- candidate screening and short listing, and
- access to an online JobSearch database.

Depending on the circumstances of individual job seekers, Job Network members may also be able to help your business with pre-vocational training, wage subsidies and other assistance. There are around 40 Job Network sites that specialise in services for people with disability.

Talk to your local Job Network member to find out how they can tailor a solution to meet your staffing needs.

For more information about how Job Network can help you find the right person for your job, visit jobnetwork.gov.au or phone 13 17 15.



Job Placement Services

Job Placement organisations form a large network of recruitment organisations (including Job Network members) who find jobs and can help employers with their recruitment needs.

What is the Disability Employment Network?

The Disability Employment Network (DEN) is a national network of community and private organisations that help employers to recruit and retain employees with disability. DEN members offer a range of free services to employers of people with permanent disability, including:

- professional recruitment advice and job matching
- on-the-job or off-site support to ensure new employees with disability settle into their job
- help with job design for employees with disability
- training information and awareness-raising activities for employers and staff, and
- help for employees whose job may be in jeopardy as a result of their disability.

DEN members can also help employers to access a range of other financial support and incentives for employing people with disability, such as workplace modifications and wage subsidies.

For more information about how DEN can help you, visit jobaccess.gov.au or phone a JobAccess Adviser on 1800 464 800.

What is jobsearch.gov.au?

JobSearch is Australia's largest free online job board. You can lodge vacancies directly onto JobSearch or phone the Employer Hotline on 13 17 15 and we will advertise the job for you. No matter how you use JobSearch, it's free.

JobSearch offers you:

- free advertising—and once you've registered you can advertise as many jobs as you like, as often as you like
- quality job seekers—JobSearch has more than 600 000 résumés online and, by using the 'Find Staff' feature, allows you to search for the right person for your business
- high visibility—nearly one million people visit JobSearch each month and there are around 70 000 jobs displayed at any one time
- auto matching—job seekers are automatically notified if your job fits their skills and abilities
- web services—save time by using Vacancy Web Services to post your jobs on JobSearch from your own recruitment system. Vacancy Web Services is a free IT interface to help employers post all their vacancies onto JobSearch quickly and easily.

What are Vocational Rehabilitation Services?

Vocational Rehabilitation Services help people with an injury, disability or health condition to work independently in the open labour market. They also provide free help to employers to achieve successful job placements of people with disability, or where an existing employee is experiencing difficulty in the workplace.

Services for employers include:

- help to match job seeker skills to your job requirements
- unique 'work training' opportunities giving you first hand experience of a worker with disability
- support provided to you and new employees with disability
- help to access other incentives and support when you employ a person with disability
- wage subsidies, and
- support for existing employees who are experiencing difficulties in the workplace due to their injury, disability or health condition.

For more information about Vocational Rehabilitation Services visit jobaccess.gov.au or phone a JobAccess Adviser on 1800 464 800.

National Disability Recruitment Coordinator

The National Disability Recruitment Coordinator (NDRC) works with employers and DEN members to:

- negotiate a supply of jobs with employers
- broadcast vacancies and provide a screening service of potential candidates
- provide employers with advice and support
- promote the employment of people with disability.

The NDRC provides larger employers with a single point of contact for the recruitment of staff with disability. Most large or multi-site employers recruit staff in bulk and can find it difficult to deal with numerous localised employment services when recruiting job seekers with disability. The NDRC links these larger employers with DEN members and helps to establish the working relationships between them.

For more information about the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator visit dwa.org.au or phone Disability WORKS Australia on 1800 356 670.

Other incentives and support for employers

There are a number of government schemes and incentives to help you if you employ, or are thinking about employing, a person with disability.

Workplace Modifications Scheme

While the majority of employees with disability won't require any workplace modifications, for some the barrier preventing them from doing a job is a workplace that doesn't accommodate them. Some might only need minor adjustments to the workplace that can easily be made at minimal cost. Sometimes what's needed is an adjustment to the work environment or some special tool or technology that will enable them to perform a job to their full potential.

For employers, the Workplace Modifications Scheme (WMS) aims to make accommodating workers with disability in your workplace easier. It's a pool of funds available to pay for the cost of any special equipment or adjustments that are needed to accommodate an employee in a job.

Sometimes the help needed by an employee may be as simple as providing them with an alarm wristwatch to remind them of when they need to do certain tasks. Other times more complex solutions are needed to accommodate them, such as building a wheelchair ramp to a workstation or installing special lighting in the workplace.

The amount of funding available for each workplace modification usually isn't limited, which means that there's flexibility to provide workplace solutions that really meet the individual needs of both employers and employees.

Funding is available to help employers accommodate both new and existing employees with disability. To be eligible, an employee must be employed for at least eight hours a week in a job that's reasonably expected to last 13 weeks or more.

To find out more about how the Workplace Modifications Scheme can help you, or to make an application for funds online, visit jobaccess.gov.au or phone 1800 464 800.

Supported Wage System

Most Australians who have disability and participate in the open workforce do so at full rates of pay. But there are some people who find it hard to get or keep a job at full wage rates because their disability affects their level of work productivity.

With the Supported Wage System, eligible people with disability can access a reliable process of productivity-based wage assessment to determine fair pay for fair work.

The Supported Wage System pays for wage assessments conducted by independent assessors. If a person with disability is starting work in a new job, you may also receive a one-off payment to help offset the cost of employing that person.

The Supported Wage System operates within the normal state and federal industrial relations frameworks. The assessed productivity applies to the wage rate only. All other employment conditions, such as the length of annual and long service leave and access to training, apply according to existing conditions of employment. The assessed wage rate is also applied to any leave entitlements of the employee.

For more information about the Supported Wage System visit jobaccess.gov.au or phone 1800 464 800.

Prime Minister's Employer of the Year Awards

The Prime Minister's Employer of the Year Awards is a highly successful national awards programme that recognises excellence in the employment of people with disability. The annual awards highlight the practical benefits and productivity gains of employing someone with disability.

For more information, including previous winners and nomination details, visit jobaccess.gov.au.

JobAccess—A national information and advice service

JobAccess is a free, confidential service providing information and expert advice to employers about recruiting and working with people with disability.

The JobAccess web site contains a range of information for employers including:

- benefits of employing people with disability
- recruiting and interviewing someone with disability
- online workplace adjustment tool
- online claims for workplace modifications
- getting advice and assistance with employing someone with disability, and
- making reasonable adjustments.

For more information and advice on employing someone with disability, visit jobaccess.gov.au or phone 1800 464 800.

Benefits of employing someone with disability

The business benefits

Some employers may not know that there are significant business benefits when you employ someone with disability. These advantages have been confirmed in both Australian and international studies.

Reliability

Overall, employees with disability rate better than other workers on reliability factors. They actually have lower levels of absenteeism and use less sick leave than their colleagues without disability.

The costs to business of absenteeism and sick leave for employees with disability can be as low as 34 per cent of the cost incurred by their colleagues¹.

Lower ongoing costs

Employees with disability show a better track record than other workers on average when it comes to employee maintenance factors. For example, people with disability have demonstrated:

- fewer accidents at work and significantly lower recorded workers' compensation incidents—people with disability were found to have only four per cent of the workers' compensation costs of average employees²
- lower absenteeism, 39 per cent lower than staff without a disability³
- lower recruitment costs—hiring people with disability can be significantly cheaper than hiring other employees—the cost of recruiting employees with disability was 13 per cent of average employees⁴.

Gains in productivity, morale and loyalty

On average, staff with disability have productivity rates comparable to other employees and they demonstrate high levels of loyalty through excellent retention rates.

Employing people with disability has been shown to improve your workplace by:

- building staff morale and teamwork—organisations who employ people with disability are often regarded by their employees to be good employers
- helping to raise management awareness of workplace practices and conditions for all employees, and
- increasing customer and staff loyalty to the organisation.

Employing people with disability makes good business sense.

¹ Graffam, J (2002) *Employer benefits and costs of employing a person with a disability. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation.*

² Ibid

³ Noble, J (1999) *Entrepreneurial Research Project, Telstra Australia.*

⁴ Graffam, J (2002) *Employer benefits and costs of employing a person with a disability. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation.*

For more information about employing only someone with disability, visit jobaccess.gov.au or phone 1800 464 800.