

# Getting Started on the Disability Inclusion Journey



**DEI** DISABILITY<sup>SM</sup>  
EQUALITY  
INDEX

Best Place To Work For Disability Inclusion

[www.DisabilityEqualityIndex.org](http://www.DisabilityEqualityIndex.org)

 **AAPD**  
American Association of People with Disabilities

**Disability:IN**  
Your business partner  
for disability inclusion.

These best practices are gathered from participating companies in the Disability Equality Index (DEI), a comprehensive benchmarking tool for disability inclusion from Disability:IN and the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD).

For ease of use, these best practices align with DEI benchmarking categories. All benchmarking questions are available for download to the public at [www.DisabilityEqualityIndex.org](http://www.DisabilityEqualityIndex.org).

# 1. Culture & Leadership

Businesses commit to and demonstrate a sustained, visible leadership and cultural commitment to disability inclusion throughout the organization.

## GETTING STARTED CHECKLIST

### Culture:

- Diversity & Inclusion written statement specifically mentions disability and it is posted on a public-facing website.
- Company-wide external hiring goal(s) for people with disabilities and progress is specifically measured.

### Leadership:

- Business has a diversity council and its mission specifically includes disability as an area of focus.
- A member of the senior executive team (within first two layers of CEO) shows external support of disability inclusion by serving on Board of Directors for an external disability-focused organization or working group and/or making a public statement.
- Senior executives' individual performance evaluations specifically include written diversity AND disability inclusion components.

## COMPANY SPOTLIGHT

**BANK OF AMERICA** 

### Bank of America's Hidden Disabilities Series

This series aims to provide awareness and resources for a variety of hidden disabilities through webinars, courageous conversations, internal articles, and personal story sharing. Examples of topics covered in the series include Mental Health Awareness, Learning Disabilities, Suicide Prevention, PTSD, HIV Awareness and Prevention, and more.

## 2. Enterprise-Wide Access

Businesses commit to and demonstrate commitment to workplace accessibility.

### GETTING STARTED CHECKLIST

- Emergency preparedness policy or procedures specifically mention people with disabilities and the company provides MORE than two (2) ways to assist people with disabilities.
- Companies have more than one way to audit the compliance of both their internal and external websites under World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 (W3C WCAG2.1).
- At least one (1) of the company centralized communications/support center(s) have a process in place to handle requests for accessible formats and the company provides training to handle requests for accessible formats.
- Provide online chat for people with disabilities the company engage with externally and/or internally in business activities, the chat is compliant with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 and it is tested to work with screen reading and other assistive technology.

### COMPANY SPOTLIGHT



#### Accenture's Accessibility Center of Excellence

As a digital company, Accenture is convinced accessibility benefits everyone in the organization—not only those with disabilities. Accessibility also assists with language barriers, cultural understanding and any person facing a permanent or temporary disability due to physical mobility, neurodiversity, disease or aging.

An "Accessibility Council" was established in 2017 to focus efforts on workplace and digital accessibility and inclusive design for all employees. Comprised of several senior leaders across functions including Legal, HR, CIO, Workplace, Communications and more, the group focused on developing an accessibility framework and strategy. The council felt that having an inclusive culture started with the infrastructure to include employees with disabilities in all aspects of the employee lifecycle. Initially, the scope included all physical workspaces in over 600 global locations, as well as all digital tools and assets that employees need to access for information, complete their job responsibilities, and develop their skills.

Today, the council has evolved into an "Accessibility Center of Excellence" led by our CIO organization and is focused largely on the assistive technology aspects of an inclusive workplace. Successes to date include:

- The establishment of Workplace Accessibility Standards;
- Review and update of all internal marketing and communications processes to ensure creation of accessible content; and
- Establishment of digital accessibility targets for all internal employee traffic.

Looking ahead, Accenture will continue advancing its multi-year road map that is putting the company on the path to addressing its goal of making 100 percent of technology interactions accessible.

Learn more: <https://www.accenture.com/us-en/success-amplifying-accenture-people>

# 3. Employment Practices

Businesses commit to and demonstrate commitment to employment practices that are that fully incorporate and include individuals with disabilities.

## GETTING STARTED CHECKLIST

### Recruitment:

- The business displays non-discrimination and/or equal opportunity policy language that specifically mentions disability on their external public-facing recruitment/career website.
- They have language specifically displayed on their external public-facing recruitment/career website about the process for requesting disability accommodations to complete the application process.
- Companies have more than two external recruitment efforts in place that are specifically geared toward hiring individuals with disabilities.

### Employment, Education, Retention, & Advancement:

- Companies provide more than one way to integrate disability inclusion in their New Hire Orientation.
- Companies encourage people with disabilities to self-identify themselves and offer more than two methods to do so.

### Accommodations:

- Disability accommodation policy is publicly available to all employees and it can be accessed in more than one way.
- There is a centralized accommodation fund and managers are made aware of it.

## COMPANY SPOTLIGHT



### SAP's Autism at Work Program

SAP's groundbreaking Autism at Work program, launched in May 2013, integrates people with autism into the workforce. Autism at Work was designed to leverage the unique abilities of people with autism and acts as a force multiplier for autism acceptance. The initiative is currently active in fourteen countries with colleagues working in over 25 different types of meaningful roles. SAP also participates in the "Autism @ Work Employer Roundtable" comprised of 20+ companies proactively focused on not only finding great talent for participating companies, but in sharing and helping other companies begin their own inclusive hiring journeys. The Roundtable recently released an [Autism @ Work Employer Playbook](#).

## 4. Community Engagement

Businesses demonstrate public-facing engagement practices that celebrate and support individuals with disabilities.

### GETTING STARTED CHECKLIST

- Have a formal program(s) in place to understand how to address the needs of the disability community.
- Have a plan in place to ensure social media postings are accessible.

### COMPANY SPOTLIGHT



#### Google's Local Guides Accessibility Campaign

The Google Central Accessibility team works with the disability community in a number of ways, including "Local Guides." Local Guides is a community of more than 100 million volunteers who help contribute information in Google Maps. During the campaign, seven million Local Guides from dozens of countries worldwide, answered more than 500 million questions with regards to wheelchair accessibility within business. Due to its success, Google now provides accessibility information for more than 200 million places on Google Maps. And to help people get to those places, the Maps accessibility team launched wheelchair accessible public transportation routes this past Spring. The campaign not only advanced the product's functionality, but also elevated the importance of disability inclusion.

## 5. Supplier Diversity

Businesses commit to and demonstrate supplier diversity practices that fully include and utilize disability owned, veteran–disability owned businesses and service-disabled veteran owned businesses.

### GETTING STARTED CHECKLIST

- Develop a supplier diversity program to include Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (DOBE®), Service-Disabled Veteran Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (SDVDOBE™), and Veteran Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (V-DOBE™).
- Company's external website specifically mentions disability-owned businesses and/or service-disabled veteran-owned businesses.

## COMPANY SPOTLIGHT



MASSACHUSETTS

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

### Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

“As part of our Supplier Diversity practices, the Supplier Diversity team partners with the “Empowering Abilities” Employee Resource Group to help advance the procurement of products and services from disability-owned businesses. Our team recognizes there are benefits to having this partnership because it better positions us to create effective and innovative ways to doing business with disability-owned businesses. In collaboration with the “Empowering Abilities” Employee Resource Group, the Supplier Diversity facilitates recommendations of disability-owned businesses for buying opportunities with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts.”

## 6. Non-U.S. Operations

Businesses commit to and demonstrate non-U.S. practices that fully incorporate and include individuals with disabilities.

### GETTING STARTED CHECKLIST

- Have standards of non-discrimination in the workplace that include the word disability and apply to all employees outside of the United States, in all countries and municipalities in which you do business.

## COMPANY SPOTLIGHT



### Microsoft's Central Accommodations Program

Microsoft created and operates a centralized accommodations program for employees with disabilities. Using an online tool or email, employees can contact internal HR professionals to discuss their accommodation requests. This resource serves as a consolidated repository for accommodation best practices and a centralized accommodation budget. By centralizing the funds, employees can receive accommodations without unnecessary financial pressures on their individual teams.