

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

For All Employees

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. It is the ideal time to increase your company's awareness of the untapped talent pool of people with disabilities and educate your company on a variety of disabilities, as well as the best time to learn or re-learn how to successfully bring people with disabilities on board.

It's also an excellent way to refresh your knowledge on the culturally competent way to recruit, retain, engage and promote this increasing demographic.

This Meeting in a Box is designed to make it easy for you to share the entire package or individual components with your employees. Each element is available in a PDF and is available to download for you and your team to print.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Timeline of legislation and events impacting the progress of people with disabilities and their achievements in the United States
- Facts & Figures demonstrating educational progress and continued employment and income inequities
- Our cultural-competence series "Things NOT to Say" focusing on people with disabilities.

This information should be distributed to your entire workforce and should also be used by people with disabilities and allies employee resource group, both internally and externally, as a year-round educational tool.

1 TIMELINE

We recommend you start your employees' cultural-competence lesson on people with disabilities by using this timeline, which documents individual achievements of people with a variety of disabilities, plus legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which changed their legal opportunities for equality.

Discussion Questions for Employees

» **What are the variety of disabilities applicable under the ADA? Why has it been so challenging for people with disabilities to attain gainful employment?**

Discuss the different experiences of people with different types of disabilities. Explain how hidden disabilities can be even more difficult to address when there are inequities.

» **Explain how your company changed its opinion, accommodation and treatment of people with disabilities. Can more be done?**

» **What are the barriers to hiring, promoting and retaining people with disabilities?**



1829 Braille

2 FACTS & FIGURES

After discussing the Timeline, the next step is to review available data and understand how and why hiring people with disabilities impacts our business.

The data we have chosen to present here provides information of relevance to corporate America, such as education (available labor pool), employment and the DiversityInc Top Companies for People With Disabilities. That list was selected based on answers to questions on the DiversityInc Top 50 survey about accommodations, recruitment outreach, on-boarding, talent development and employee resource groups for people with disabilities. DiversityInc evaluates participation in the [National Organization on Disability's Disability Employment Tracker](#) as a significant factor in determining the Top Companies for People With Disabilities.

Discussion Questions for Employees

» **As baby boomers retire, the need for skilled workers in the United States is intensifying. The disabilities population is an untapped resource, yet many companies shy away from this group.**

How can your company — and you personally — create more awareness of the value of reaching out to the disability community?

» **How can you mentor and teach people with disabilities, especially those still in college?**

» **How can companies work with disability non-profits to identify and recruit talent?**

» **How can you educate managers and the workforce about cultural competence?**

» **Do you encourage people with disabilities, especially those with hidden disabilities, to self-identify?**

» **What are the benefits of a corporate culture where people are free to bring their whole selves to work?**



1960 First Paralympic Games

3 THINGS NOT TO SAY TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

This “Things NOT to Say” was written by Frank Kineavy, a contributing writer at DiversityInc. Frank, who is living with cerebral palsy, shares what to avoid in the workplace when interacting with employees with disabilities.

Discussion Questions for Employees

- » **What other phrases have you heard addressed to people with disabilities that were condescending or offensive?**
Discuss how these phrases and stereotypes impact office morale and productivity.
- » **What do you do when you hear an offensive comment in the workplace toward an employee with a disability?**
- » **After today’s lesson, what would you do if you overheard a colleague make one of these comments?**
Continue the discussion with each employee having a plan of action on how to address offensive language.



1964 Civil Rights Act

Timeline

National Disability Employment Awareness Month each October recognizes the societal and workforce contributions of people with disabilities. Congress designated in 1945 the first “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week”; the word “physically” was removed in 1962 to allow for the inclusion of all Americans with disabilities. In 1988, the week was extended to a month and its name changed to “National Disability Employment Awareness Month.”

- 1753** Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia is first hospital with ward to treat mental illness

- 1773** Virginia establishes first hospital solely for treatment of “idiots, lunatics and other people of unsound mind,” the Public Hospital for Persons of Insane and Disordered Mind, now Eastern State Hospital

- 1776** Stephen Hopkins, who has cerebral palsy, signs the Declaration of Independence, saying, “My hands tremble, but my heart does not”

- 1805** Dr. Benjamin Rush, considered the father of American psychiatry, publishes *Medical Inquiries and Observations Upon the Diseases of the Mind*

- 1817** American School for the Deaf opens in Connecticut. American Sign Language originates here

- 1829** Louis Braille publishes his eponymous raised-dot alphabet

- 1832** Perkins School for the Blind opens in Massachusetts

- 1841** Activist Dorothea Dix begins her crusade on behalf of mentally ill people, leading to the first state-run mental hospitals

- 1860** British physician William Little first identifies cerebral palsy

- 1866** British physician John Langdon Down publishes first description of Down syndrome

- 1869** First wheelchair patent is issued in United States

- 1880** National Association for the Deaf is founded

- 1907** Indiana becomes the first state to pass a eugenics law to sterilize “confirmed idiots, imbeciles and rapists” in state institutions. Similar laws are adopted by 31 other states

- 1918** Soldiers Rehabilitation Act provides job training for returning World War I veterans with disabilities

- 1924** Helen Keller graduates from Radcliffe College, becoming the first deaf blind person to earn a bachelor’s degree

- 1927** In *Buck v. Bell*, Supreme Court rules forced sterilization of people with disabilities is not a violation of 14th Amendment

- 1933** Franklin Roosevelt, who is paralyzed from the waist down by polio, becomes President. Accounts differ as to the extent he went to hide his disability

- 1935** Social Security Act provides funds to each state to assist, among others, the blind and “crippled” children

- 1943** Dr. Leo Kanner becomes first person to clearly define autism

- 1949** United Cerebral Palsy is founded

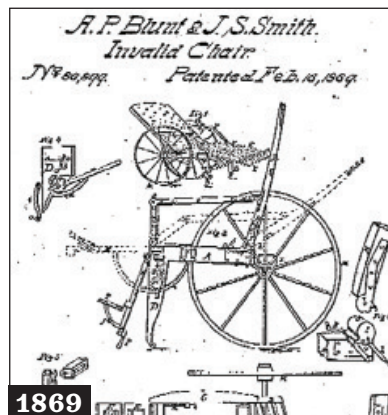
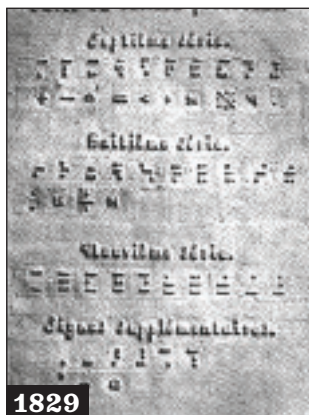
- 1956** Disability Insurance program is added to Social Security

- 1960** First Paralympic Games held in Rome

- 1961** *Making Buildings Accessible to and Usable by the Physically Handicapped* is published. Forty-nine states adopt accessibility legislation by 1973

- 1962** Eunice Kennedy Shriver starts a day camp that becomes Special Olympics

- 1962** Ed Roberts, who has polio, enrolls at the University of California, Berkeley. He is considered the father of the Independent Living movement



- 1964** Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity or national origin, but does not include disability

- 1965** Medicaid program is established to cover healthcare costs for people with disabilities

- 1965** Autism Society of America is founded

- 1970** Judy Heumann successfully sues the New York City Board of Education when her application for a teaching license is denied because her wheelchair is deemed a fire hazard

- 1973** Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits public institutions that receive any federal funds to discriminate on the basis of disability

- 1975** Education for All Handicapped Children Act requires public schools that accept federal funding to provide equal access to education for children with disabilities

- 1976** Amendment to Higher Education Act of 1972 mandates services for college students with physical disabilities

- 1978** National Council on Disability is founded in Department of Education

- 1981** United Nations declares 1981 International Year of Disabled Persons

- 1984** Voting Accessibility for Elderly and Handicapped Act requires polling places to be accessible to people with disabilities for federal elections

- 1990** President Bush signs the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which guarantees access to and prohibits discrimination against individuals with “physical or mental disabilities”

- 1992** United Nations establishes Dec. 3 as International Day of Disabled Persons. In 2007 the name is changed to International Day of

Persons With Disabilities

- 1998** Federal judge rules that golfer Casey Martin, who has a circulatory disorder, may use a cart to compete on the PGA Tour

- 2000** President Clinton signs Executive Order 13163, calling for federal government to hire 100,000 people with disabilities over next five years. Few steps are taken to implement the order, forcing President Obama to sign another executive order in 2010 requiring compliance

- 2001** Congress creates the Office of Disability Employment Policy in Department of Labor

- 2004** Chicago hosts first Disability Pride Parade

- 2008** ADA Amendments Act grants broader protections to workers with disabilities

- 2009** Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act prohibits employers from using genetic information to discriminate against employees or job applicants

- 2011** Revised ADA regulations adopt 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design and address other accessibility issues, including accommodating service animals as well as wheelchairs and other mobility devices

- 2014** Employment of people with disabilities by the U.S. federal government hits record high, representing 13.56 of total federal workforce for permanent employees

- 2017** The Billion Dollar Roundtable votes to expand criteria of diverse businesses to include Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (DOBEs)

- 2017** “Sesame Street” introduces Julia, a Muppet who has autism, to television



Sources: *ABILITY Magazine*, disabilityhistoryweek.org, National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth, *The New York Times*, nps.gov, Temple University, whitehouse.gov

Facts & Figures

POPULATION

Number of People With Disabilities

40.7 million

(12.8% of Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population)

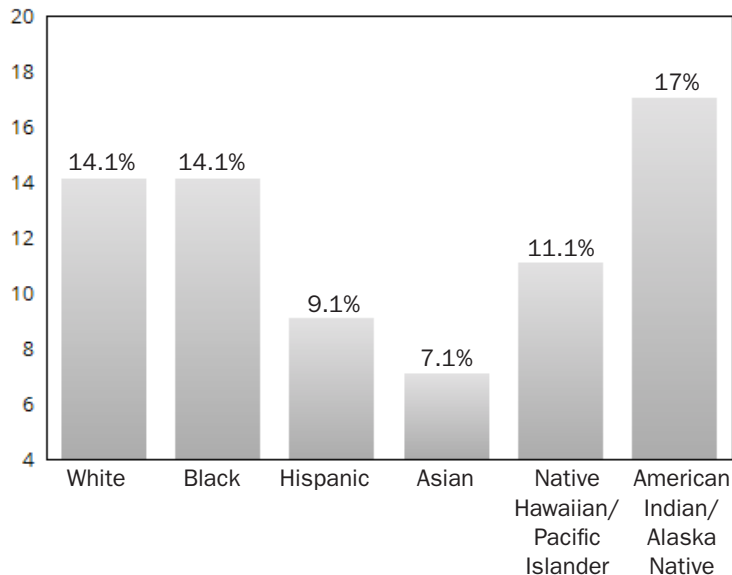
Percent of People With a Disability by Age

17 years old and under: **6.3%**

18 to 74 years old: **44.7%**

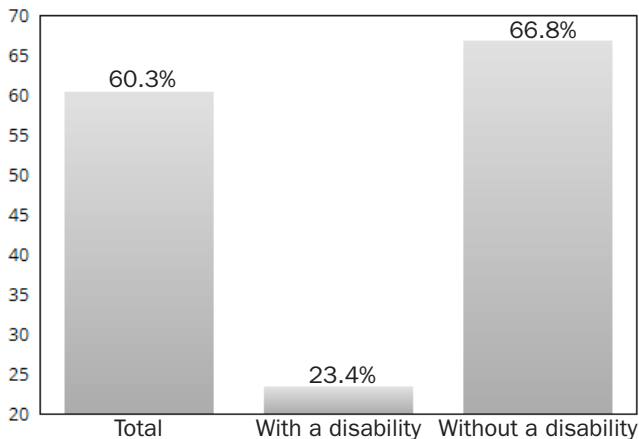
75 years old and over: **49.5%**

Percent of People With a Disability by Race



WORKFORCE

Percent of Non-Institutionalized Persons 16 and Older in the Workforce

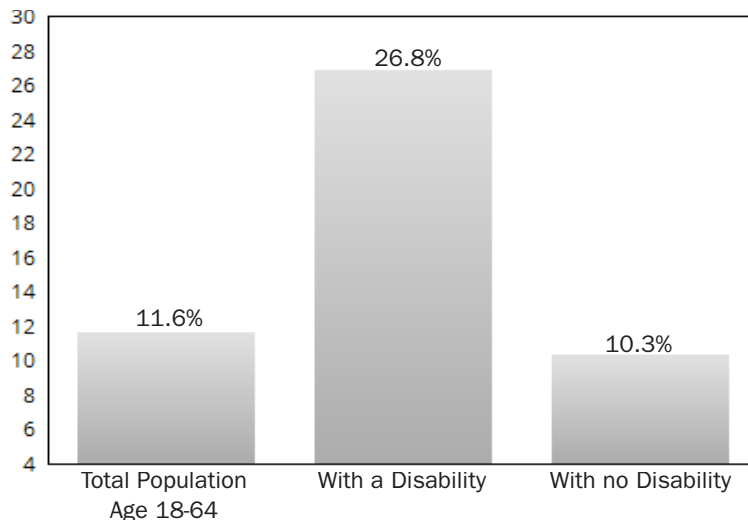


FINANCES

Median Yearly Earnings, People With a Disability, 2016: **\$22,047**

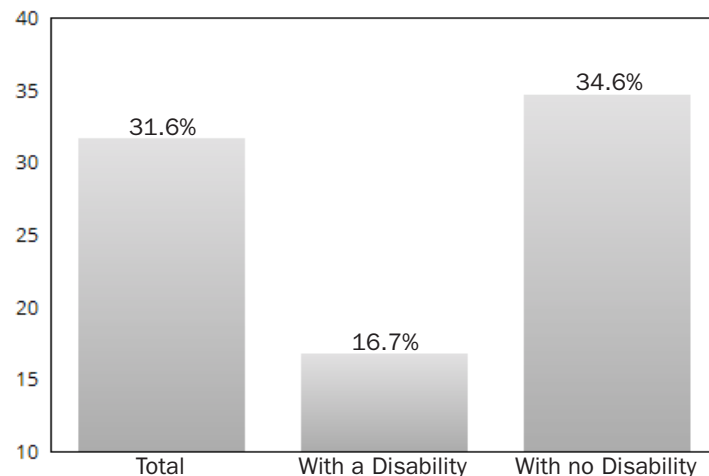
Median Yearly Earnings, People With no Disability, 2016: **\$32,479**

Percent of People in Poverty in 2016



EDUCATION

Percent of People 25 and Older with a Bachelors Degree or Higher



DIVERSITYINC TOP 50

2017 DiversityInc Top Companies for People With Disabilities

1. EY
2. Northrop Grumman
3. Accenture
4. Comcast NBCUniversal
5. Prudential Financial
6. PwC
7. Sodexo
8. Eli Lilly & Co.
9. Monsanto
10. Hilton Inc.
11. TD Bank
12. Booz Allen Hamilton

Things NOT to Say to People With Disabilities

By Frank Kineavy

Frank Kineavy is a 25-year-old journalist living with cerebral palsy, and he is not able to walk or talk. Although Frank cannot physically write, he uses a scribe (an adapted keyboard with word prediction and an augmentative communicative device) to write and communicate with others. Frank's scribe also allows him to write articles here at DiversityInc. Frank previously worked in the digital media department at Rutgers University.

Frank earned his BA in Liberal Arts in 2013 from Villanova University. While attending Villanova, he took advantage of many opportunities, including managing the basketball team under Coach Jay Wright and giving a Tedx-Villanova Talk. He was also the subject of the award-winning student documentary "Coming Off The DL." Frank says his fondest memories were while participating in an able-ism



awareness group.

Frank is a resident of Sea Girt, New Jersey. He is an avid music fan, a movie guy and a political buff. During his free time he writes comedy and volunteers as a football, baseball and basketball coach.

Twenty-five years ago, people with disabilities were secluded from society. Often, they were educated only with each other at special schools, lived together in group homes and socialized exclusively with each other. But thanks to a bill signed by President George W. H. Bush, people with disabilities were given access to society.

In the 1990s, it became more common for a 7-year-old to ask their parents if they could have a play date with their classmate who happened to be in a wheelchair. In the 2000s, it became common to sit next to a person with a disability in your college English class. And today, 26 years after the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed, it is slowly becoming more and more common to have a person with a disability in your place of employment.

Like people of color, the LGBT community and women, most people with disabilities do not want and should not get preferential treatment at work, but like everyone else, they have the right to be treated with respect and as a significant member of any organization. Something new is always uncomfortable, and having a person with a disability as a coworker or employee is no different.

On the next page there are six tips to keep in mind when interacting with a person with a disability — but, like everything else in life, the best guideline is your own intuition.

Here are six things to keep in mind when working with employees with disabilities:

1 Never make the ordinary seem extraordinary.

With the ADA's first generation entering adulthood, there is a large number of young adults with disabilities who have known nothing else but to expect themselves to accomplish the same milestones as their peers.

Even though what your employee or coworkers have accomplished may seem impressive, be careful never to refer to them as heroes. Expect the same out of them as any other employee or coworker.

2 Never assume someone you just met with a disability is exactly like someone you know with a disability. Don't give advice on how to assist employees with disabilities just because you know someone else who has a disability.

No two humans are alike. We all have our unique personalities. If you have a friend with a disability and you meet someone with the same disability, probability will tell you two things:

- The two of you probably don't know each other; and
- If he/she is with a friend, the friend probably knows the person with a disability well, so you don't have to tell the friend how to handle the person with a disability.

3 Don't put an employee with a disability in a box or say "your skills are only suited for one job."

With more people with disabilities graduating college, there are more people with disabilities entering the workforce. Like most kids who are fresh out of college, they often have no idea what they want to do. What often happens with people with disabilities is their employer notices a very specific skill they possess and only utilizes them for that skill. This often frustrates the employee, who is eager to explore all facets of the job.



The solution is simply to get to know the person and, from your interactions with them, you will find some have the ability to contribute to your company in other ways.

4 Never assume a person with a disability shares the same political/social views as you, just because they have a disability.

Not everyone you work with has the same worldview you have. It's the same for your coworkers with disabilities. Even if you feel your views are beneficial to people with disabilities, don't push your views on anyone, including people with disabilities.

Obviously, there are some jobs where politics and political talk are inherent to the job at hand, but in this case, make sure you know where the person stands before you assign them a project.

5 Anyone can work with anyone. Don't say one employee can work with an employee with a disability because they are accustomed to it.

Just because an employee is comfortable with a coworker with a disability doesn't mean they always

have to work together. It is healthy for a person with disabilities to have to work with other people, and it would hinder both employees to put that pressure on the comfortable coworker, who has their own job to perform.

This can also be beneficial because everyone should be comfortable with all of their coworkers in a good work environment, and this will never happen if they don't ever get the chance.

6 Never put 1 through 5 ahead of approaching a person with disabilities.

Often in this ultra-politically correct world, the fear of saying something offensive to someone of different backgrounds trumps the desire to approach them.

When trying to decide whether to approach a person with a disability, it is important to realize that people with disabilities are exactly like the rest of us in two ways:

- They are wired to be social creatures in need of human connections; and
- As stated in number two, no two people with disabilities are alike. What is offensive to one person might not be offensive to another.