



INCLUSIVE HIRING TOOLKIT

Alberta employers are currently dealing with labour shortages, competitive hiring pressures, and increasing expectations around compliance and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance. Hiring individuals with disabilities expands access to a skilled and reliable workforce, improves retention and workplace culture, and supports a strong, strategic approach to hiring.

Why this Matters: By the Numbers

- Over 1 million Canadians with disabilities (ages 15–64) are not working but could work with the right supports.
- Only 62% of working-age persons with disabilities are employed, compared to 78% of those without.
- This gap continues today, highlighting a major untapped talent pool.
- Canada is working with global partners and has committed to improving inclusive employment through initiatives like the G7 Solfagnano Charter.

The Value of Inclusive Workplaces

- Stronger recruitment outcomes
- Performance and retention benefits
- Increased availability of a wide range of skills and knowledge
- Higher retention rates
- Strong attendance and reliability
- Being seen as a socially responsible corporation
- Becoming a 'contemporary' employer
- Heightened customer service and enhanced relationships in diverse communities

Activity: Myth or Fact?



1. Hiring employees with disabilities increases workers' compensation insurance rates.
 Myth Fact



2. Employees with disabilities are more likely to be absent from work.
 Myth Fact



3. People with disabilities are less able to meet performance expectations.
 Myth Fact



4. Workplace accommodations are usually expensive to implement.
 Myth Fact

Answers & Insights

1. **Myth:** Insurance rates are based on job risk and safety history, not disability.
2. **Myth:** Employees with disabilities have similar attendance rates as others.
3. **Myth:** Research shows employees with disabilities perform at comparable levels.
4. **Myth:** Most accommodations cost little or nothing, and many are not needed at all.



What Workplace Diversity Looks Like

- Workplace diversity comes in many forms:
 - Age and generation,
 - Gender and gender identity,
 - Persons reporting an Aboriginal (or Indigenous) identity;
 - Members of a visible minority group;
 - Individuals reporting a disability; and
 - Women in underrepresented occupations

Understanding Inclusion

- Inclusion means being valued, respected, and supported, with the right conditions in place for each person to reach their full potential.
- It includes respecting differences in:
 - Culture, background, beliefs, gender, abilities, age, communication styles, etc.
- Remember:
 - Treating people fairly doesn't mean treating everyone the same.
 - Employers have a responsibility to support accessibility and accommodate employees with disabilities.

Activity: Check the Benefits



Instructions: Check the benefits you think would have the greatest impact on your organization:

- Improved retention and reduced recruitment costs
- Access to a wider, often untapped talent pool
- Job-ready employees with the right supports in place
- Increased productivity and strong job performance
- More diverse, inclusive, and innovative teams
- Low-cost or no-cost workplace accommodations

Reflection: What is one benefit you want to explore or prioritize in your workplace?

How to Implement Diversity



01

Don't copy and paste.

Every organization is different, so diversity initiatives must be tailored to fit. Approaches depend on unique cultural, social, and organizational factors. Effective programs are tailored to an organization's context.

02

Clearly identify what you are trying to achieve.

'Workplace diversity' is too vague, clarity matters. Many initiatives miss the mark by focusing on representation rather than their intended outcomes. Define a clear goal to achieve meaningful results.

03

Win 'hearts and minds'.

Successful initiatives answer the basic question, "Why should I do this?" If individuals within the organization cannot see the benefits of a program (or even worse if they identify disadvantages) then it will ultimately fail.

04

Good design is important but good implementation is vital.

Even the best designed diversity initiatives can falter when handed to those without the right tools, skills, or motivation. Without proper support, well-intentioned programs can fall short in practice.

Recruitment and Job Design Practices

Refine job description

- Identify essential responsibilities.
- Remove outdated or non-essential requirements.
- Use clear, functional language.

Accessible Interview Options

- Video, phone, written assessments, or other formats.
- Advance questions provided.

Signal Inclusion

- Add an accommodation statement to all job postings.
- Promote openings through mainstream channels as well as disability employment partners.

Inclusive Decision Making

- Competency-based interviews.
- Clear rating criteria.
- Training for hiring managers in disability-aware communication and human rights requirements.

Workplace Accommodations

- Adjusted start times or schedules.
- Modified workstations.
- Assistive technology.
- Clear written instructions or visual workflows.
- Job coaching support.
- Reallocation of non-essential tasks.



Onboarding and Retention

Effective Integration Practices

- Structured onboarding plans with timelines.
- A designated mentor or workplace contact.
- Clear expectations and routine check-ins.
- Periodic reviews of accommodation needs.

Best Practices

- Recognize diversity: People with disabilities come from all ages, cultures, and backgrounds.
- Don't assume all need assistance: Ask first and respect autonomy.
- Avoid stereotypes:
 - Glasses does not mean someone is blind.
 - Deaf people may use their voice or read lips, but not all.
 - Wheelchair use doesn't always mean complete paralysis.
 - Slow or delayed speech isn't a sign of low intelligence.
 - Learning disabilities do not equal low ability: People just learn differently.
- Remember: People are people: Treat them with the same respect and expectations as anyone else.