



An Inclusive Workplace: First Steps

A workplace that includes people with disabilities will generate results that are good for any business: improved retention, superior customer engagement, and tax benefits are just a few.

Successfully building an inclusive and integrated workplace takes time and cannot be done overnight. The long-term rewards must be earned.

To get to those rewards, organizational leaders need to take three initial steps:

Step One - Make the Decision



Creating an inclusive workforce starts at the top. Any organizational change will face internal challenges, even if the change is positive. Those challenges are lessened when senior leadership sets the direction. Without support from the highest levels, any new initiative will likely fail. Making the commitment to hire people with disabilities the most important part of the process.

Step Two - Set Goals

Once the decision to build an inclusive workforce has been made, organizational goals must be established and communicated. Those goals could be:

- 10% of the permanent workforce will be people with disabilities within four years.
- Starting with leadership, all employees will receive training on hiring and working with people with disabilities.
- The physical workspace will be fully accessible within one year.



Step Three - Find Expert Partners

Many organizations have experience in building inclusive and integrated workspaces. Working with expert partners who understand the benefits and challenges of the process makes the work easier. Some expert partners include:



- Arkansas Rehabilitation Services
- The Association of People Supporting Employment First
- The Arkansas Society of Human Resource Management
- Disability Rights Arkansas

An Inclusive Workplace: Three Steps

These fundamental steps prepare businesses to successfully create an inclusive workplace: make the decision, set the goals, and include experienced partners in the process.



1. Decision



2. Goals



3. Partners

Resources

Try partnering with some experts who understand the benefits and challenges of the process.

ARS - Arkansas Rehabilitation Services

<https://dws.arkansas.gov/ar-rehabilitation-services>

APSE - the Association of People Supporting Employment First

<https://www.apsear.org>

ARSHRM - Arkansas Society of Human Resource Management

<https://www.arshrm.com>

DRA - Disability Rights Arkansas

<https://disabilityrightsar.org>



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