



The Business Case for Disability Employment

Disability is a natural part of the human experience. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Disabilities may be visible, invisible, and acquired. A strong region requires the equal opportunity, inclusion, and full participation of all residents.

Our State of Employment

The Chicago region strives to be a prosperous economy. In the region, people with disabilities account for approximately **10%** of the overall population, more than **800,000 residents**.

Yet, for people with disabilities, employment rates are stagnant at **20%** compared to 53% for those without disabilities. Despite this gap, many people with disabilities are ready and want to work, serving as a large untapped labor pool.



Disability Employment for a Thriving Region

Benefits to Employers

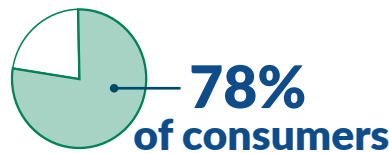
Inclusive hiring practices give companies a competitive edge by¹:

- ✓ Increasing the pool of qualified candidates
- ✓ Increasing productivity and reducing turnover by nearly **1/3**
- ✓ Meeting diversity targets for federal contractors

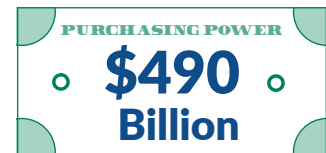
National Opportunity for Growth



Companies in the Chicago region can tap into a market and talent pool of **10.7 million people** with disabilities.



78% of consumers purchase goods from businesses that ensure accessibility—attracting new consumers who want to buy from inclusive companies.



People with disabilities have an estimated purchasing power of **\$490 billion**.

¹“Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage”, Accenture

Workplace Access

Ensuring accessibility in the workplace can be achieved at a low cost. **59%** of workplace accommodations cost nothing, while the average accommodation costs only about **\$500** per person with a disability.

What does an inclusive and accessible workplace look like?

Here are some ways to stay compliant and create a better workplace for everyone:



Establish a written reasonable accommodation policy and procedure and include disability in your official company-wide diversity and inclusion policy.



Ensure a company-wide mandate that all owned and leased company locations, buildings, and facilities be accessible and tested by people with disabilities.



Create a company policy of web accessibility and user test all your online platforms with people with disabilities.



Require diversity and inclusion trainings on disability for all current employees and new hires.



Partner with disability leaders and organizations to get insight on company-wide disability inclusion initiatives.



Encourage employees with lived experience to create a disability employee resource group and utilize that group as a company resource.

Your Next Step: Inform and Act.

Improving access to employment and markets for people with disabilities will make our region and its companies even stronger. To learn more about how to become more inclusive in your work, visit disabilitiesfund.org.

