



**Australian Government**

# AN EMPLOYER'S GUIDE TO EMPLOYING SOMEONE WITH DISABILITY

## Introduction

Australia's workforce is constantly changing to prepare for, and respond to, our future economic, environmental and social goals. Increasingly, employers need to consider accessing a diverse range of skilled and talented people.

This guide brings together information on the wide range of Australian Government resources which are free of charge and available to help you successfully employ people with disability, injury or health condition. We want to help your business thrive and give people with disability the opportunity to contribute to our economic future.

People with disability are often characterised by a high degree of dedication and commitment to their role. Employers can access valuable employees who are reliable, skilled and have a great attitude and desire to work when they employ people with disability.



## Benefits of employing someone with disability

### The business benefits

Employing people with disability makes good business sense.

There are significant business benefits when employing someone with disability. These advantages have been confirmed in both Australian and international studies.

Overall, employees with disability rate better than other workers on reliability factors. They have lower levels of absenteeism and use less sick leave than their colleagues without disability. The costs to business of absenteeism and sick leave for employees with disability can be as low as 34 per cent of the cost incurred by their colleagues.<sup>1</sup>

Other benefits of employing people with disability include low employee turnover and low incidence of workplace injury.<sup>2</sup>

On average, staff with disability have productivity rates comparable to other employees and they demonstrate high levels of loyalty through excellent retention rates. Employing people with disability has been shown to build staff morale and teamwork—organisations which employ people with disability are

often regarded by their employees to be good employers. They help raise management awareness of workplace practices and conditions for all employees and increase customer and staff loyalty to the organisation.

For more information about employing someone with disability, visit [www.jobaccess.gov.au](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au) or phone **1800 464 800**.

**As an employer, a major concern when recruiting staff is getting the right person for the job. Sometimes the right person will be someone with disability.**

People with disability bring a range of skills, talents and abilities to the workplace. They work in all sorts of jobs and hold a range of tertiary and trade qualifications. Some hold senior managerial positions, while others are employed in customer service, manual or technical jobs.

<sup>1</sup> Graffam, J Employer benefits and costs of employing a person with a disability. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation. 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Safety & Compensation Council report "Are People with disability at Risk at work? May 2007

The majority of employers who have hired someone with disability can testify to the benefits of doing so. However, if you have not recruited or worked with staff with disability, you might be unsure how to go about it.

There are two major Australian Government funded employment services programs available to employers who wish to recruit people with disability. They are Disability Employment Services and Job Services Australia.

## What are Disability Employment Services?

Disability Employment Services are a national network of organisations funded by the Australian Government to help employers recruit and retain employees with disability. Disability Employment Services help job seekers with disability, injury or health conditions in more than 1900 sites across Australia.

A key distinguishing feature of Disability Employment Services is their capacity to support and manage a participant's condition in the workplace, along with providing ongoing support in the workplace for as long as it is required.

Disability Employment Services help job seekers with disability to access individually tailored employment services, with strong links to training and skills development, particularly in areas of skills shortages.

Providers offer a range of free services to employers of people with disability, injury or health condition including:

- professional recruitment advice and job matching
- help with job design for employees with disability
- on-the-job or off-site support to ensure new employees with disability settle into their job
- ongoing support for as long as it is required, for employees and employers who require support to maintain their employment
- training information and awareness activities for employers and staff
- help for employees whose job may be in jeopardy as a result of their disability.

Disability Employment Services can also help employers to access a range of other financial support and incentives, such as workplace modifications, assistive technology, mental health first aid training and disability and deafness awareness training, Auslan interpreting and wage subsidies.

A list of Disability Employment Services in your area can be found at [www.jobsearch.gov.au](http://www.jobsearch.gov.au).

For more information about how Disability Employment Services can help you, visit [www.jobaccess.gov.au](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au) or phone a JobAccess adviser on **1800 464 800**.

## What is Job Services Australia?

Job Services Australia is Australia's largest government funded employment service with offices located in more than 2100 locations across Australia. They are a mix of large, medium and small, for-profit and not-for-profit organisations.

Job Services Australia providers work closely with employers to assess their staffing requirements and to help them find work-ready employees, particularly in an industry or sector experiencing skills in demand. Job Services Australia providers work with employers to ensure job seekers are suited to their business. In addition to job placement services, Job Services Australia providers can help employers and job seekers to access relevant apprenticeships and traineeships.

Your local Job Services Australia provider can help your business with:

- high quality recruitment services
- referral of job seekers to your vacancies

- skills training for job seekers that is relevant to your business
- access to the Australian Government's free online JobSearch database.

All Job Services Australia providers deliver assistance for disadvantaged job seekers, including people with disability. In addition, across Australia there are around 134 locations where Job Services Australia providers specialise in services for people with disability. Talk to your local Job Services Australia provider to find out how they can tailor a solution to meet your staffing needs.

Opportunities for wage assistance and subsidies may also be available for the provision of ongoing work opportunities.

A list of Job Services Australia providers in your area can be found at **[www.jobsearch.gov.au](http://www.jobsearch.gov.au)**.

For more information about how Job Services Australia can help you find the right person for your job, visit **[www.deewr.gov.au/JSA](http://www.deewr.gov.au/JSA)** or phone **13 17 15**.

## What is jobsearch.gov.au?

JobSearch is Australia's largest free online jobs website.

Employers can advertise jobs directly on JobSearch, or phone the Employer Hotline **13 17 15** for assistance and advice about job vacancies. The hotline can also advertise jobs on behalf of employers.

JobSearch offers employers:

- free advertising of job vacancies
- a secure personal page to manage your job vacancies
- the ability to search for staff using the 'find staff' feature
- high visibility—JobSearch receives around 1 million visitors a month.

## National Disability Recruitment Coordinator

Some large employers who operate in different locations may find it difficult to deal with multiple local employment services when recruiting job seekers.

The National Disability Recruitment Coordinator works with large employers and Disability Employment Services to:

- promote the employment of people with disability
- help large employers recruit staff with disability
- disseminate vacancies and provide a pre-screening service of potential candidates
- give employers advice and support.

The National Disability Recruitment Coordinator links these large employers with Disability Employment Services and helps to establish working relationships between them.

For more information about the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator visit [www.jobaccess.gov.au](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au) or phone **1800 464 800**.

## Other services for employers

There are a number of other Australian Government initiatives to help you if you employ, or are thinking about employing, a person with disability.

## Employment Assistance Fund

The Employment Assistance Fund provides financial assistance for work-related modifications, equipment and services to help people with disability to get employment and perform their work as independently and productively as possible. The assistance is available to new and existing employees with disability.

It can help cover the costs of modifications to the physical work environment, modifications to work vehicles, adaptive technology for the workplace, a wide range of information and communication devices, Auslan interpreting and specialist services for employees with specific learning disorders or mental health conditions.

The Employment Assistance Fund provides financial assistance for disability and deafness awareness training and mental health first aid training.

For employers, the Employment Assistance Fund makes accommodating workers with disability in the workplace easier. It can pay for the cost of special equipment, services or adjustments that are needed.

The assistance is tailored to the individual needs of the person with disability, their job requirements and work environment. The Employment Assistance Fund is managed through the JobAccess service which may arrange a free workplace assessment to recommend necessary adjustments for an employee with disability.

To find out more about how the Employment Assistance Fund can help you, or to make an application for funds visit [www.jobaccess.gov.au](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au) or phone **1800 464 800**.

## Supported Wage System

Supported Wage System is a workplace relations mechanism that allows employers to pay a productivity based wage that matches an independently assessed work productivity rate. Most Australians who have disability and participate in the open workforce do so at full rates of productivity and pay. However, some people are unable to keep a job at full wage rates due to the effect of disability on their level of work productivity. With the Supported Wage System, employers of people with disability can access a reliable process of productivity based wage assessment to determine fair pay for fair work.

The Australian Government contracts a panel of independent Supported Wage System assessors to conduct workplace productivity assessments for employers who wish to employ people with disability under the Supported Wage System provisions.

The Supported Wage System operates within the normal federal and state industrial relations frameworks. Your employment services provider can tell you more about the system and help you apply for it as appropriate.

For more information about the Supported Wage System visit [www.jobaccess.gov.au](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au) or phone **1800 065 123**.

## JobAccess—A national information and advice service

JobAccess is a free, confidential telephone service providing information and expert advice to employers about recruiting and working with people with disability.

The JobAccess website provides step-by-step guides and checklists on recruitment, adjusting a workplace, the Supported Wage System, benefits of employing people with disability, online applications for the Employment Assistance Fund,

understanding rights and responsibilities at work and much more. The online Workplace Adjustment Tool can be used to source practical ideas and solutions for workplace modifications.

For more information and advice on employing someone with disability, visit [www.jobaccess.gov.au](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au) or phone **1800 464 800**.