



ONBOARDING
SUCCESS KIT

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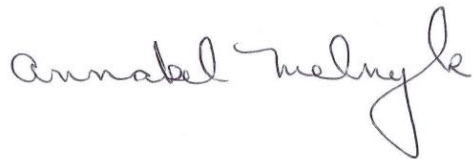
A Message from Aspire Richmond Employment Services

Thank you for your interest in the Onboarding Success Kit!

Aspire Richmond Employment Services is committed to supporting employers to successfully create an inclusive and diverse workplace by providing you with information, education, best practices and useful tools and resources including the Onboarding Success Kit!

The Onboarding Success Kit contains 2 tools which will help set the stage for a successful inclusive hiring experience: an organizational readiness self-assessment and an onboarding checklist. These tools will help you fine tune your current onboarding process to accommodate individuals with diverse abilities and help make the onboarding process less stressful and more successful for you and for your new employees!

We will hope you will find these resources useful, informative and inspiring!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Annabel Melnyk". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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ARE YOU READY FOR SUCCESS?

Organizational Self-Assessment

Your organization may be inspired to embrace inclusive hiring, but are you ready to make it a successful experience for both you and your new employee? This organizational self-assessment isn't scored, but it will highlight some of the key areas you want to address before you hire!

What's your big picture WHY related to inclusive hiring?

If your organization has a compelling reason for hiring people with disabilities it is easier to sustain your commitment to making inclusive hiring a success. It will serve as a North Star to guide you, anchor your commitment and re-inspire you when the inevitable unforeseen issues arise. What does your organization believe? How do your corporate values relate to inclusive hiring? What is your vision for creating an inclusive workplace?

Have you defined what inclusive hiring means to your organization?

Are you sure everyone is talking about the same thing when you are talking about hiring people with disabilities? Are you referring to people who are blind, hearing impaired or who use wheelchairs for mobility? People with developmental or intellectual disabilities?

Have you removed unintentional barriers?

Meeting your organization's inclusive hiring goals requires that you look at your processes and environment with a fresh eye. Are there policies or procedures that can unintentionally act as a barrier to qualified applicants?

For example, have you considered that the traditional hiring process is a barrier in and of itself? People with disabilities are often excluded during automated screening processes because their resumes often don't look ideal due to a lack of experience, a gap in employment or non-corporate experience. Non-readers may not be able to read job postings and respond. People with Autism may perform poorly during interviews because they don't look the interviewer in the eye. People with physical limitations may be avoided because of concerns they won't have the strength or stamina needed.

It's important to get clear about the real requirements to be successful in a position and be prepared to provide alternate pathways to employment.

Is your staff on board?

Have you spoken with your staff about your desire to create a more inclusive workplace? Have you shared your WHY? Have you asked them about their willingness to work with and support people with disabilities? Do they have concerns that need to be addressed? Would some education or disability awareness training help to inspire your staff to get on board and help them to understand their role in making it a success?

Have you identified natural supports?

Onboarding and orientation to a new job can be intimidating, especially for people with disabilities who may not have a lot of experience in the workforce. Can you designate specific co-workers that are engaged, convenient and available to answer questions and provide support for your new employees? A great natural support is to organize onboarding buddies who can help orient new workers to their workspace, show them around, help them find their way around, introduce them to people that can help them out when they have questions and include them in the group during breaks or at lunch.

Are you mindful of the impact of your workplace culture?

Every workplace has its own unique culture and corporate values. It's important to be mindful about your company values, expectations and unwritten rules to ensure you choose the best fit for your employees. If yours is a very social company, or your workplace is high energy and fast moving, it may not be a good match for an employee that is easily distracted and may have problems staying on task in that atmosphere. Or if you place a premium on efficiency and production, your organization may be the perfect fit for an individual that is happy to focus on a task and get it done without needing a lot of social interaction. Taking a bit of time to understand the subtle impact of the 'personality' of your organization will go a long way to ensuring a successful hiring experience for both of you.

Do you have a champion? (Lewis, 2017)

Does your organization have someone with the desire, opportunity, social capital and authority to say YES and drive your inclusive hiring initiative forward? Most often this is not someone in a staff position (HR, finance) it's someone responsible for operations, who is able to see and appreciate the business case for hiring people with disabilities.

Do you have a resource to lean on? (Lewis, 2017)

The best resource is an organization or service provider with the tools, resources and connections to facilitate action. An outside agency such as Aspire Richmond Employment Services has the expertise and resources to provide guidance and support that can ensure a successful hiring experience.

Do you have an advocate? (Lewis, 2017)

This person is 'all in' on the value of inclusive hiring and is committed to taking consistent action to help it happen. It could be an HR person or someone in charge of Diversity who can help with removing unintentional barriers and providing support and co-ordination.

Are your policies helping or hindering your ability to hire the right people for the job?

Sometimes policies can provide unintentional barriers to hiring people with disabilities. For example, your policy or expectation for the interview process could be that you speak only to the job candidate in an office setting. For individuals unfamiliar with the interview process this may be intimidating resulting in the candidate's inability to put their best foot forward. It may be useful to consider having a familiar person such as their job coach along to facilitate the interview questions, or perhaps conducting a working interview or demonstration of tasks instead of a traditional interview would allow the candidate to be more successful. After all, it's more important that they can perform the work they are being hired for rather than show up well during an interview.

Are you prepared to be flexible?

Hiring people with disabilities is uncharted waters for many companies. The key to successful navigation is to be flexible and creative, beginning with how you recruit and hire. Partnering with an agency like Aspire Richmond can help you access qualified and pre-screened candidates for jobs that may not be identified by traditional screening procedures.

Finding work is challenging for people with disabilities, so you may be in a situation where you will be hiring with someone who hasn't had the benefit of formal work experience. Consider incorporating a flexible approach to onboarding and training people. Using a strategy like providing conditional employment that includes training and job coaching provides time for the individual to learn their job and demonstrate their ability to perform before they become regular employees.

Are you prepared to offer accommodations to facilitate a good fit for employees? (Kenneth J. Freedan, Kathy Martin, Dr. Gary Birch, Mark Wafer)

Consider how flexible you are able to be with accommodations to facilitate people's job performance. **Most employers report no or low cost for accommodating employees with disabilities.** Fifty-seven percent said the accommodations needed by employees cost absolutely nothing, while 37% reported a one-time cost. Only 4% said the accommodation resulted in an ongoing, annual cost to the company. Of those accommodations that did have a cost, the average one-time expenditure by employers was \$500.

Have you reviewed the job requirements listed for the jobs you are posting?

Do you have clear and specific expectations for the job and what is ACTUALLY required for success in the position? What are the key determinants for success? Is it really necessary for a candidate to have a high school diploma or a particular skill, or will a go-get-um attitude suffice? Being clear from the outset helps to accurately pre-screen candidates to identify people with sufficient skill to be successful in a position.

Are your desired job outcomes, bottom line results and employee fit in alignment?

Inclusive hiring isn't a charitable act. It can make a real dollars and cents contribution to your bottom line and it doesn't require you to abandon the standards of productivity and performance you apply to any other employee. The key is to ensure that there is a careful fit of ability with the desired job outcomes.

Research shows that persons with disabilities are work-competent, reliable, and hard-working individuals. This translates into increased productivity and savings for employers. According to studies:

- 90% of persons with disabilities rate average or better for on the job performance than their non-disabled colleagues. (Statistics Canada)
- A three year study at Washington Mutual found a turnover rate of 8% among people with developmental disabilities, compared to an overall rate of 45% in the general population. (Crain's Chicago Business)
- Tim Horton's franchisee Megleen Inc reported that absenteeism of 35 employees with disabilities (17% of the workforce) was zero! (Information provided by franchise holder)
- The US Department of Labor also found through four national studies that people with disabilities experience fewer disabling injuries than the average employee exposed to the same hazards. More than 40% of the employees in Walgreens' Connecticut and

South Carolina distribution centres have disabilities, but these two centres have 40% fewer safety incidents than their other locations. (Kenneth J. Freedan, Kathy Martin, Dr. Gary Birch, Mark Wafer)

- Staff retention is 72% higher among persons with disabilities, saving millions of dollars each year in recruitment and training costs (Statistics Canada)

Inclusive hires may or may not fit into the existing job categories your organization is familiar with. Custom designing positions to take advantages of a person's talents and abilities should be a consideration for all your employees, not just people with disabilities.

As an example, one organization employed an outstanding sales person that was regularly called to task for failing to follow up on promises to customers and deliver sales reports. Once his manager hired an admin assistant to manage the paper work and follow-up, his sales numbers increased because he was focusing on what he loved to do.

When people are doing a job that is designed with their abilities in mind, it is perfectly reasonable to expect them to perform to the standards set for that particular position. Are you clear about your employee's talents and the standards you want them to work to? Aspire and other community partners can help you custom design positions to improve your organizations productivity while maximizing the talents of your staff.

Onboarding process

Onboarding is a challenging time for both the employee and the employer. New employees are on a steep and often stressful learning curve trying to learn the lay of the land, understand the workplace culture, learn new tasks and responsibilities, and prove themselves. The reality is that it takes time to feel comfortable and competent.

Do you have a formal on-boarding process to help new employees fit into the workplace more easily; to connect them with important resources and natural supports in your organization? Who's included on your on-boarding team? Does everyone know their role?

Use our Onboarding Success Checklist on the following pages as a guide to refine your own onboarding process to help give people with disabilities the best opportunity to become a successful and valued team member in your business.

Works Cited

Crain's Chicago Business. (n.d.). *Talent Knows No Limits (2012)*. www.talentknowsnolimits.info.

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Successful Onboarding Checklist

Onboarding can be a challenge for both organizations and new employees. We've created this checklist to help make it a more successful experience for both of you! Working with a Community Partner such as Aspire Richmond Employment Services will help make your hiring process as efficient, and seamless as possible. Your Community Partner will be a useful resource that you can rely on for their knowledge and expertise concerning supported employment and for assistance during the process of hiring, onboarding and training.

Preparing For Your Employee's Start Date

- Inform staff of the new employee's name, position and start date.
- Add your new employee and Community Partner to your organizational contact list.
- Invite your Community Partner to the worksite to become familiar with the tasks required in the position and to plan any supports or accommodations required.
- Make a copy of the job description to share with your Community Partner.
- Work with your Community Partner to identify your new employee's abilities and the best way to support them during the orientation process. Share this with the new employee's Supervisor.
- Gather important information to be shared with employee on first day.
- Make arrangements for their workspace, and ensure necessary equipment is available.
- Order company wear or safety equipment required.
- Identify Natural Supports in the workplace. (These are people the new employee can approach to ask questions and get direction.)
- Designate an Onboarding Buddy who will help familiarize your new employee to their workspace, show them around, help them find washrooms, coffee/lunch room, equipment and work supplies, introduce them to people that can help them out when they have questions and include them in the group during breaks or at lunch. Prepare a list of suggestions to help their new co-worker feel welcome and supported as they learn their new job.
- Set up an orientation team and assign responsibilities.

- Decide what tasks the new employee will be assigned for the first day. (Don't expect they can master everything on the first day! Keep it manageable.)
- Manager/ Supervisor should plan to keep their schedule as flexible as possible on the employee's first day so they are available to respond to questions and provide support.

First Day/Shift Orientation

- Welcome the new employee. (If they are accompanied by a job coach or support person, focus your comments on the employee.)
- Explain the orientation plan for the day.
- Review job description and complete any paperwork required.
- Introduce them to their Supervisor.
- Review work expectations: such as arrival time, shift schedules, clocking in and out if necessary, who to call in case of illness, and timing of breaks.
- Give the employee a tour of the workplace, and show them where they will be working.
- Introduce them to coworkers. (Remind co-workers to re-introduce themselves later as your new employee may be meeting a lot of people for the first time.)
- Introduce your new employee to their Buddy or go-to person.
- Have their Buddy show them where to store their belongings, hang their coat, store their lunch, find washrooms.
- Review any Health and Safety procedures.
- Introduce your employee to the tasks they will be doing the first day. Demonstrate their tasks, then give them an opportunity to practice and demonstrate their skill. Ensure they know who to turn to for help and encourage them to ask questions while they are learning.
- If the employee is working independently, be sure to check in frequently the first day to provide support and to debrief at the end of the day.

First Weeks

- Have Supervisor provide support and check on progress during each shift.
- Ask your employee how they are feeling about the job and if there is anything you can do to help them do their job better.
- Encourage your new employee to ask questions. (Some may be reluctant to ask questions and reveal they are uncertain about their tasks.) Check for understanding when possible.
- Provide performance feedback regularly and often.
- Check in regularly with your Community Partner to discuss progress, questions or any concerns that have arisen, so they can be addressed quickly.
- Review additional duties that have been added and discuss performance expectations.
- Ensure the employee has met all staff, is settling in and is feeling supported.

First 6 Months

- Review standard probation procedures with your employee. Make sure they know they are being held to the same performance standards as other employees.
- Schedule regular conversations with the employee to ensure they are on track.
- Review performance expectations.