E/BRG Toolkit
2024

Disability:IN®

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Introduction

Who These Resources Are For

The Disability:IN E/BRG Leadership Committee created this toolkit to share resources and best practices with each other. We have included information on how to start and develop a disability-focused affinity group, as well as how an E/BRG can promote disability inclusion throughout the employment life cycle, positively impact company goals, and enable employees with disabilities to bring their whole selves to work.

Why Employee/Business Resource Groups Matter

Employee Resources Groups (ERGs) go by many different names (i.e., Affinity Groups, Business Resource Groups, Employee Network Groups), but regardless of what they are called, they share a common purpose. Catalyst defines them as "a voluntary, employee-led group that serves as a resource for members and organizations by fostering a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with organizational mission, values, goals, practices, and objectives. Other benefits include the development of future leaders, increased employee engagement, and expanded marketplace reach."

You may have heard the saying "Nothing about us without us." Disability ERGs play an important role in ensuring the collective voices of employees with disabilities within their organizations are heard. ERGs can identify accessibility and inclusion gaps in the workplace including, but not limited to those related to hiring, employee development, retention, benefits, and digital & physical accessibility. They can also offer insights on how to improve products and services for and marketing to individuals with disabilities resulting in positive impact to the overall business and market share.

How to Use the Toolkit

The resources are meant to be used as a general guide and to provide ideas on best practices that you may want to consider implementing within your ERG/BRG, understanding that organizations have different company cultures and business needs that may drive the execution and success of any given initiative.

A Note on Language

Throughout this toolkit, you will see both person-first language and identity-first language. We understand that individuals who identify as disabled will have their own preference so rather than choose one, we use both. You will also see the terms Employee Resource Group (ERG) and Business Resources Group (BRG) used interchangeably. You may also see some of the resources with Associate Resource Group (ARG), Employee Network (EN), or even other names for these employee groups, as different companies use different terminology when referring to their network groups.

We Value Your Feedback

The ERG/BRG Leadership committee is continually updating this toolkit with information and resources that might be useful to leaders of disability ERG/BRGs. If there is something missing that you would like to see included in the toolkit or if you have a resource or best practice you would like to add, send an email to ERG@DisabilityIN.Org.

Join the E/BRG Leadership Committee

Disability:IN Corporate Partners are invited to appoint up to two representatives to this committee by sending names & contact information to ERG@DisabilityIN.Org. The Committee typically meets virtually three times per year and once in-person at the Disability:IN Annual Conference.

Not a Disability:IN partner yet? Learn how to become a corporate partner by sending your inquiry to Mackenzie@DisabilityIN.Org.

E/BRG Governance

Foundational Stage

Identify and engage executive sponsor(s)

The Disability:IN E/BRG Leadership Committee created this toolkit to share resources and best practices with each other. We have included information on how to start and develop a disability-focused affinity group, as well as how an E/BRG can promote disability inclusion throughout the employment life cycle, positively impact company goals, and enable employees with disabilities to bring their whole selves to work.

Form E/BRG Board & Committees

In addition to board positions such as Chair/President, Co-Chair/Vice President, Treasurer/Finance Lead and Secretary, consider what positions you may need to support your ERG structure. (i.e., communications, department Liaisons, membership, outreach, education, infrastructure & resources, regional leads). Position titles and responsibilities will vary based on the size and needs of the ERG/BRG.

If there are other diversity-focused ERGs within your organization, it may be helpful to look at their structures to see if a similar structure would make sense for your ERG/BRG. Here are some common roles and possible responsibilities within ERG/BRGs:

Chair/President

- Responsible for the E/BRG mission statement

- Spearheads development/implementation of annual strategic plan

- Oversees budget development ensuring alignment and integration of ERG/BRG 's global strategy and programming are aligned with the company's overall Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

- Provides leadership to E/BRG membership by identifying & articulating annual strategic goals, leading monthly meetings of the committee, and approving events

- Partners with Executive Sponsor(s) and other department leaders (HR, IT, supplier diversity, facilities, etc.) to ensure engagement and support of BRG Board members to drive key Culture, Talent & Business initiatives

- Participates in regular meetings with other BRG leaders to help foster a collaborative and engaged BRG environment

- Attends and represents membership at the quarterly Inclusion Council meeting hosted by the CEO and the executive leadership team

- Leads transition planning activities: Identifies high potentials to assume greater responsibility in the BRG and expose them to board opportunities to gain experience; develop potential successors; and ensures best practices are documented and saved

- Serves as a role model for inclusive behavior by creating an environment characterized by open communication, creative thinking, cohesive team effort and trust

- Help grow a diverse talent pipeline within the company

- Recruit new ERG/BRG members and board/committee members

- Track metrics and share with appropriate stakeholders

Co-Chair/Vice President

- Serves as back-up resources to the leader when both are not able to attend meetings and events together

- Oversees group logistics – meeting agenda, places, times

- Helps ERG leadership team to organize ERG events

- Coordinates community service activities

- Mentors committee leaders

Treasurer/Finance Chair

- Submits, tracks and confirms budget requests and approvals for E/BRG expenses

- Develops and manages annual budget

- Allocates budget (internal coding) for events from national and local sites, and resolves any budgetary matters with vendors

- Ensures all necessary documentation of expenses are maintained and submitted on a timely basis

- Supports budget process and prepares financial reports and presentations to share with E/BRG Board, Executive Sponsor, and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion team

Secretary

- Coordinates E/BRG registration of new members

- Maintains E/BRG membership list

- Acts as official recorder of meeting notes and keeps all records

- Manages events/planning calendar

Communications lead

- Develops E/BRG key messaging, and spearheads communication strategies

- Receives approval on key communications from Chair/President, Executive Sponsor and other Board members/leads, as needed

- Creates E/BRG internal messaging and manages communications, such as emails, flyers, SharePoint/newsletter submissions, etc.

- Oversees all membership and employee-wide E/BRG-related communications and promotions

- Writes/manages E/BRG event/activity submissions for internal communication channels, such as employee emails, intranet, Diversity & Inclusion Newsletter, etc.

- Partners with Diversity, Equity & Inclusion team for external publicity or speaker opportunities, such as blog, website, social media/media, etc.

- Selects/approves design, photography and any marketing materials representing E/BRG with Corporate Communications approval.

- Gathers photos, videos and summaries of events

Culture Lead

- Develops and distributes the agenda and shall arrange logistics for all membership meetings (with input from Chair/President, other board members, and leads)

- Ensures all members have been welcomed, assigned to site location and engage new members

- Manages the mailbox emails and runs membership reports from SharePoint for the site leads monthly

- Promotes, encourages and organizes local volunteerism in coordination with local leads

- Partnership with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team to elevate BRG and to continue to foster an inclusive culture where employees feel valued and fully engaged

Talent Chair

- Assesses and monitors the professional development needs of E/BRG members and develops/implements plans to meet those needs

- Partners with Diversity, Equity & Inclusion team and HR to develop/distribute member surveys, including skills assessments, analysis/develop talent programs

- Identifies and establishes networking, mentoring and other professional development opportunities for membership

- Supports key professional development initiatives, talent pipeline and mentoring/sponsorship programs

Business Lead

- Establishes strategy/direction on business model intake for the BRG members to participate in business outcomes

- Oversees activities in partnering with internal business groups to reach corporate goals as well as participation in diversity initiatives that promote leveraging BRG cultural insights

- Assists in collaboration and development of a forum to leverage BRG members for business initiatives.

Strategy Lead

- Establishes strategy/direction on business model intake for the E/BRG members to participate in business outcomes.

- Oversees activities in partnering with internal business groups to reach corporate goals as well as participation in diversity initiatives that promote leveraging E/BRG cultural insights.

- Assists in collaboration and development of a forum to leverage E/BRG members for business initiatives.

- Partners with other leads to empower E/BRG's to make a significant impact on business growth & diverse market expansion.

- Partners with other leads to implement Business Case & Intake Model and strategize on needed business resources

Operations Lead

- Ensures programming among the board members and site leads is relevant to the BRG's Mission and Goals

- Oversees official publication of BRG marketing material, and any other communications or feedback vehicles that impact the image of the organization.

- Assists Site Liaisons and Site Leads with report out progress and events

- Serves as official custodian of records, including the Charter & playbook and the Executive Board minutes and Leadership Committee meetings provided by Communications.

- Assists with email requests and follow up inquiries

Site Liaison Lead

- Partners with Site Leaders in all locations to ensure that they are providing leadership support, consistency and best practices.

- Ensures consistency and helps each site develop effective business plans, which are supportive of the E/BRG Mission & Goals providing each site with support for following:

- Maintaining compliance with the E/BRG mission & vision and with the broader Enterprise rules governing Business Resource Groups.

- Soliciting budget requests in a timely fashion.

- Having a forum to surface issues that relate to the E/BRG.

- Holding regular site member meetings to capture issues and ideas for the BRG Board and providing monthly status reports to the Strategy Lead.

- Cataloging events at the site and leveraging best practices and ideas across all the sites

Membership Development Lead

- In partnership with the Site Leads, develops and implements effective business plans for managing recruitment and member benefits, which are supportive of the BRG's Mission & Goals.

- Works with the Site Liaisons to ensure regular site meetings are held to secure member status updates and feedback.

- Manages the Email distribution list and consistency on welcoming new members to the BRG.

Determine Initial E/BRG Structure (Regional, Sub-groups)

Things to consider while determining the E/BRG structure can include the general company location and size to determine how many sub-groups may be needed. Sub-groups can be broken down by region as well as by disability. Focus on aligning the disability E/BRG strategy with your business outcomes and the goals of other E/BRGs. Also determine a structure that will help drive impactful outcomes for both the business and E/BRG members. Here are sample operating models from a few corporate partners:

PNC Financial

Industry: Financial Services

Company Size: 50,000+

Company Locations/Regions/Global: Global; regional markets across over 40 states in the U.S.

Established: 2010

High Level Structure: E/BRG is primarily focused in U.S. Hybrid model – Regional representatives to coordinate activities within the region and awareness groups that function across all regions

How Sub-groups are Identified: Hybrid – Regional and disability specific across all regions

Budget Allocation: Budget allocated annually from D&I based on operating plan-approval from E/BRG leadership and D&I team needed for spending not included in initial plan; incremental funding may be sought from E/BRG Exec sponsor.

E/BRG Leadership

- Centralized ERG Leadership group located in the U.S.

- Each U.S. region has a Regional Advocate to coordinate activities within the region

- There are also awareness groups focused on specific disabilities or life conditions that operate across all of the U.S. regions

Executive Sponsor: One (1)

Initiatives and Working Relationship Between Different Locations:

- Combination of separate initiatives and events that are coordinated with other diversity-focused ERGs within a region

- Annual disability conference – regional watch parties

- Membership drive at US level and regional advocates lead the effort within their region

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Additional Information

- Mission Statement – (possibly include a link to the list of mission statement examples). We don't have a mission statement per se, but our tagline is "employees helping employees."

- How the ERG was implemented/evolved - PNC Cares (now PNC ENABLE) started in 2010 as a virtual ERG when several call center employees with disabilities came together as a group.

- How to build a sense of community across E/BRGs – **PNC Enable built community in several ways:**

  - By offering programming such as lunch and learns, annual conferences, etc.

- Nine (9) awareness groups focused on specific disabilities or stages of life

- Regional advocates in markets across PNC's footprint to promote PNC Enable in their local markets, host local events, etc.

- SharePoint site housing resource and a "Connections" page. (Connections is a wiki)

- PNC Enable president personally contacts all new members

- Collaborating with other PNC E/BRG on events, book clubs, etc.

Strengths/Successes

- Membership growth from 687 (end of 2019) to a current total of 1,658. Awareness groups grew from five (5) to current nine (9)

- 35 Regional advocates (starting from zero in 2018)

- Launched buddy program to assist PNC Enable members with cultural agility.

- Grew PNC Enable leadership team from nine (9) members to 26 since 2018

- PNC Enable has been virtual since inception. "Voice at the table" provide PNC input when company is seeking recommendations for accessibility enhancements.

Opportunities

- Challenge with hourly employees or employees with fixed worked schedule being able to actively participate in PNC Enable events and awareness group meetings – Consider asking leaders of awareness groups to have meetings at different times on different dates that provides opportunities for employees with different schedules to attend; asking all awareness groups to move meetings/events to later in the day due to time differences; any events after hours are on their own time; partnered with care center locations and managers will consider allowing employees to attend during lunch hour or break time; non-exempt and non-customer facing, it is easier for manager to give employees the time.

- Virtual model allows for broader but not as deep connections as having members meet in person.

- Include information about how your programs link to the ERG mission statement, which then links to overall DEI strategy

- Selection of E/BRG/Leaders who are strategic thinkers and/or high enough in the organization to enable growth – Leaders must be at a certain career band (salary grade)

Lessions Learned in Implementing/Evolving into Current Model

- Ideally candidates for elected office should already be active leaders being an awareness group leader, committee chairperson or committee member

- Adding awareness groups, regional advocates and increasing frequency of newsletters have really helped to drive membership growth and engagement

How Are Executive Sponsors Brought On?

- Diversity and inclusion office appoints executive sponsors

How does ERG connect with Executive Sponsor and/or company executives?

- ERG president meets with Exec sponsor monthly; Exec sponsor is active participant in annual conference; annual membership meeting that Exec sponsor participates in; annual membership meeting that Exec sponsor participates in; Operating plan is reviewed and approved by Exec sponsor; Exec sponsor helps engage with other company leaders when needed (i.e., instrumental in pulling together speakers for Leadership panel—including CEO—at annual conference)

Any special ERG programs that are unique to PNC – internal or external?

- Mentoring day for high school students – ERG participates in company-wide mentoring

- Annual accessibility summit put on by accessibility committee (digital accessibility, real estate, customer facing) come together to discuss accessibility needs and progress; ERG participates in discussions; members serve as panelists/speakers and provide input into summit content (i.e., developed accessibility catalogue)

- Accessibility Operating committee is a steering committee spearheaded by accessibility office and is a way to stay connected to accessibility effort and provide input (i.e., training for non-apparent disability training and an ERG leader provided input for training)

- Has a list of member volunteers that serve as a focus group for the rest of the organization when they have a need for input from ERG

- Do regional advocates meet with other regional advocates on a regular basis? Yes, meet monthly to share what they are doing in their region, best practice sharing, share information to be pushed out within the regions.

TIAA

Industry: Financial Services

Company Size: 15,000+

Company Locations/Regions/Global: Global; across the U.S. with 4 hub locations

Established: 2014

High Level Structurel: National; U.S. ERG plus 6-chapter locations

Budget Allocation: Budget allocated annually at the national BRG level and distributed to chapters as requested/approved

E/BRG Leadership: 2 National Chairs; each chapter has at least co-leads (2 leaders per chapter)

Support structure by role:

- 2 Executive Sponsors
- 2 National Co-Chairs
- 2 Communications Leads
- 3 Corporate Social Responsibility Team

- 1 Business Manager

- 1 Sharepoint Lead

- 2 Community Circles Leads

- 1 Health and Wellness Lead

Executive Sponsor(s): 2 Co-Executive Sponsors are assigned to the BRG and each has a 2-year term

Initiatives/Working relationship between different locations:

- Disability E/BRG has their own national strategy, goals and initiatives to complete each year; coordinate with the other diversity-focused BRGs to collaborate on joint events throughout the year where topic aligns.

- Each chapter establishes how they will align and execute to the national strategy, but may work together to leverage what they are doing.

Cummins

Industry: Manufacturing

Company Size: 50,000+

Company Locations/Regional/Global: Global

Established: 2007

High Level Structure:

- Global Inclusion Leadership Council (GILC) with an Executive Sponsor and Leadership Chair for each of our six primary dimensions of diversity. Local or Regional Chapters located around the world.

Specific to Disability Inclusion:

- 4 U.S. local chapters

- 6 Regional ERGs, some with local chapters (India, Latin America, Europe, Africa/Middle East, Asia Pacific, China)

How Sub-Groups are Identified: Chapters

Budget Allocations: Budget allocated annually from Corporate Diversity, Equity & Inclusion with additional support from local or executive sponsors. In the United States each ERG is given a budget of $1500 from a Central Diversity and Inclusion budget.

E/BRG Leadership: Each Regional and Local chapter has two Co-Chairs. Many chapters also have members serving as workstream or pillar leaders.

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                    Sponsor
                Corporate Leaders
                        |
                ERG Leaders/ Co-
                    Leaders
                     Leadership
                        |
       -----------------+-----------------
       |                |                |
  Leader / Co-    Leader / Co-     Leader / Co-
    Leader           Leader           Leader
  Education &     Communication    Infrastructure &
   Awareness                          Resources
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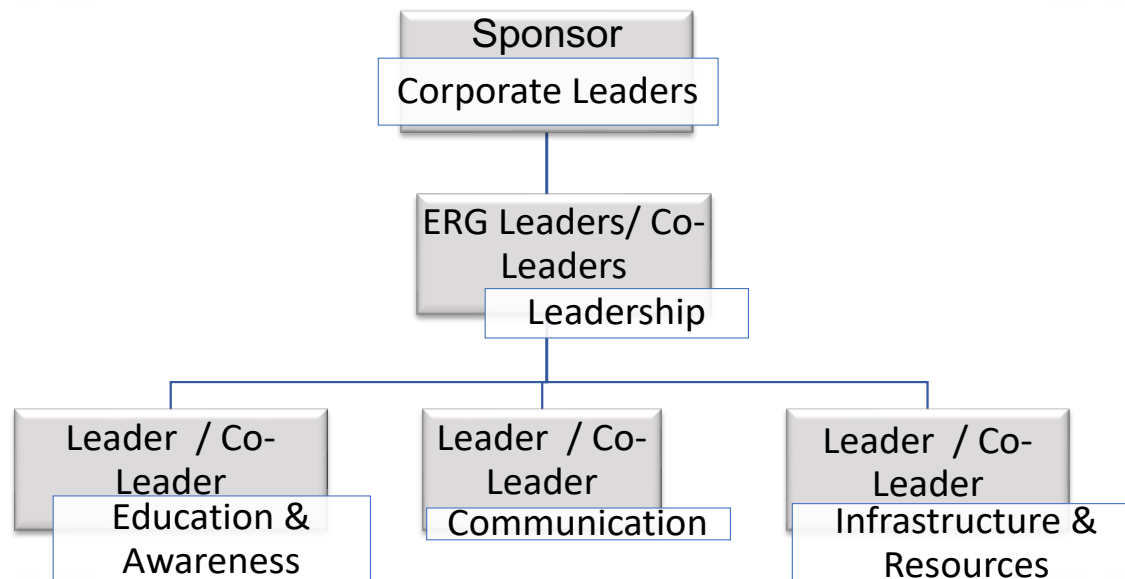
Executive Sponsor(s):

- The GILC has an Officer-level Executive Sponsor and a Director-level Chair dedicated to Diversity Inclusion ERGs.

- Each Regional and Local Chapter has an Executive Sponsor.

- Managers who are passionate about making Cummins a more inclusive place to work

- Demonstrated personal commitment to D&I, inside and outside of Cummins

- Strategize with and coach ERG Leaders on how to effectively operate a new ERG

- Support the creation of new ERGs

Initiatives/Working Relationship Between Different Locations (national to regional oversight, etc.):

- The GILC sets global initiatives and workplans based on the Cummins Leadership Team's DE&I Goals. The GILC Sponsors and Chairs cascade the initiative and workplans to Regional and Local ERG leaders. Regional and Local ERGs set workplans specific to their ERG goals and in support of the global workplans. The GILC Chairs meet regularly with ERG Leaders to help set local strategy and goals for their ERG. Co-leaders of all the Disability Inclusion ERG's meet monthly to discuss and support each chapter as they coordinate their own initiatives locally.

Additional Information:

- Over 30 years ago, Cummins employees began forming affinity groups organized around traditional minority workplace groups such as women, African Americans, and Hispanics. Affinity groups were primarily used for social and networking opportunities and served as a support system and social outlet for their members. In 2019, Cummins made the shift from affinity groups to employee resource groups (ERG) supporting six primary dimensions of diversity: Gender, Multi-Cultural, Disability Inclusion, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation, Age, and Military Service. The purpose of the shift was to strengthen the inclusiveness of all employees. Affinity implies gathering of the same. Cummins culture supports a workplace where all empl employees can be involved in resource groups, bringing the power of diversity to our ERGs. This shift has led our our employee groups to move from event-driven to serving as a critical strategic partner for Cummins.

- Sponsors and chairs bring strategy to ERGs that are set at Leadership Council level; sponsors in US chapters are Director level or above.

- Each leader/co-leader for workstreams sets their strategy each year – can be any level of employee who has passion around the ERG and time to dedicate to those positions; a lot of advertising talking about development opportunities; typically hard to fill positions so whoever steps up is placed in the role for a 2 year commitment; work on succession planning for backfilling the leadership roles; similar for sub-committee positions

- Global inclusion leader in each region pulls all ERG leaders together within the region on a regular basis.

Have a Designated D&I Lead as Liaison for Disability ERG

Select a designated D&I lead to serve as a liaison for the Disability ERG

Determine ERG/BRG Name

There are a few things to consider when selecting a name for your ERG:

Be careful not to use euphemisms (i.e., differently abled, challenged, special) as many individuals with disabilities feel use of these types of words perpetuates the negative stigma associated with disability and it is better to just use the word disability.

It's ok to use the word "disability" in your ERG name. In fact, including disability in your ERG name will help employees more easily identify the demographic you serve versus using acronym or some clever name.

Be sure your employees with disabilities are comfortable with the name being used to represent them.

Most companies have a single disability-focused E/BRG that includes all employees regardless of type of disability. Within that resources group, sub-groups/committees are formed to focus on specific types of disabilities: mental health, neurodiverse/autism, physical, caregivers, blind, and deaf/hard-of-hearing.

ERG/BRG Name Examples:
- Abilities First/ Abilities First & Allies
- Abilities in Motion (AIM)

- Ability: Advance, Advocate, Educate
- ABLE (acronym for: Achieving Beyond Limits and Expectations or Abilities Beyond Limits and Expectations or Ability Bettered through Leadership and Education or Ability Beyond Limited Expectations)
- ABLED (acronym for: Awareness Benefiting Leadership and Employees about Disabilities)
- Access
- Access for Disabilities Network (ADN)
- AccessAbilities
- AccessAbility
- ADAPT (Abled & Disabled Allies Partnering Together)
- ADAPTability
- ADEPT (Abled and Disabled Employees Partnering Together)
- AIM (acronym for: Ability Inclusion Movement or Abilities in Motion)
- All Abilities Resource Group (AARG)
- Allies for Disabilities
- Awareness of Visible and Invisible Disabilities (AVID)
- CAN (acronym for: Capable + Able Network or CapAble Associate Network
- CapAbilities
- Combining Abilities for Business Success (CABS)
- Connected Disability Awareness Network (CDAN)
- DAN (acronym for: Disability Advocacy Network or Disability Alliance Network)
- disAbilities Business Impact Network
- Disabilities Network
- Disability/disability/DisABILITY
- Disability+
- DisAbility Advocacy Inclusiveness Resource Team
- Disability Advocacy Network (DAN)/Disability Employee Network (DEN)

- disAbility Awareness
- Disability Confidence
- Disability Connection
- disAbility Diversity Network
- Disability Inclusion Employee Resource Group/Network
- Disability Interest Forum
- disABILITY Outreach & Inclusion Team
- Employees with Disabilities and their Allies
- Empower Abilities
- Empowering Abilities ERG
- Enable/ENABLE /ENABLED (acronym for: ENhancing ABilities and LEveraging Differences)
- EnableIn
- Focus on Abilities
- Global DisAbilities Council
- HEART (Helping Each Ability by Respecting and Teaching)
- iCAN
- InABLE
- In-Abled Business Resource Group
- LEAD (Leadership, Education and Allies for Disabilities)
- MyAbilities
- People with Disabilities
- People with Disabilities and Allies Council
- People with Disabilities and Caregivers Associate Resource Group
- possAbilities Employee Resource Group
- possABILITY
- Powering Connections for All Abilities (PCAA)
- Professionals with Disabilities Network (PwDN)

- REACH (Recognizing Employees of All Abilities, Celebrate and Harness)
- REAL DEAL (Resourceful, Empowering, Awareness, Limitless for Disabled Employees Accessing Life)
- Strive (for disability empowerment)
- The Council on Disability Awareness
- Thrive-Disability Leadership Council
- True Ability
- U Belong

Develop Your Mission/Vision Statement(s)

Having a mission and vision can help define future goals and strategies to achieve those goals. Together they help you develop a strategy and guide decision making.

The mission statement specifically outlines the goals and strategies for reaching those goals. It is your grand plan – how you are going to change, disrupt disability inclusion. It is forward-looking and creates an image of the ideal state the ERG wants to achieve. It is inspirational and aspirational.

The vision statement helps look to the future and provides the direction in which to go.

It supports the vision of the ERG leadership team and will serve to communicate the purpose and direction to employees and key stakeholders.

Here are some sample mission and vision statements:

- Mission: To advance a positive and supportive workplace for employees with disabilities and increase disability awareness.

  The Disability Network is here to support, advocate and celebrate the inclusion of people with disabilities in [company's] workforce.

  The Disability Network strives to provide support to customers and the community with disabilities. Our contribution to [company's] workforce assists in building better communities. It helps to increase [company's] awareness and reputation regarding disability issues, accomplishments, and challenges.

We work to ensure that each employee is provided with the resources to work in a safe, respectful, fair, and culturally sensitive workplace.

- Mission: Leading the way by actively shaping culture for people with diverse abilities as well as for their caregivers and advocates. Vision: Transforming the world to enable our best every day.

- The mission of the Disability ERG is to expand [company's] culture of inclusion and understanding by raising awareness that those with disabilities have vital skills and unique talents and are an important dimension of diversity and identity at [company].

    This group will contribute to an environment that validates the dignity, trust and respect of employees who live with and / or support those with disabilities, visible and invisible medical conditions, or illnesses so that our employees are recognized and supported as whole people, and so that [company] benefits from a more integrated, healthy, and productive workforce.

- Mission: ERG promotes the inclusion and celebration of people with any disability to be empowered to bring their "whole selves" to work.

    We raise awareness for issues specific to people with disabilities in the workplace and community while creating allies and sustaining a safe environment where we can learn, teach, and share resources for individuals, customers, and allies.

    Vision: To be a trusted thought leader for disability inclusion by being an advocate in the workplaces and communities where we do business. To be the company of choice for employees, candidates, and customers.

- Demonstrate our commitment to employees with disabilities, caregivers, and supporters by creating opportunities to connect, learn, develop and contribute powerfully to our company and communities.

- Mission: The Disability ERG is committed to fostering an inclusive environment for persons with disabilities and employees who are caregivers to family members in need.

    Vision: Our vision is an environment where everyone with the passion to create extraordinary products has the opportunity to contribute through inclusion, accommodation, communication,

networking and community engagement, we strive for an environment that is inclusive of persons with disabilities.

- Disability BRG supports [company] by creating a culture that welcomes people with differing abilities, exemplifies [company] as a disability friendly employer, works to better serve our customers and colleagues with disabilities and helps improve the communities in which we work and live.

- Disability ERG is a community for those who have a disability, support a close family member, friend or colleague with a disability, and any employee that wants to help raise awareness and champion support for impacted individuals. Through education, advocacy, and networking, the ERG aims to ensure that all employees impacted directly or indirectly by a disability have the resources, opportunities, and support they need to excel in their career and help [company] achieve its mission of making the world a safer place.

- Our mission is to foster an environment that affirms the contributions of employees with visible and non-visible disabilities and supports the work of every employee who is impacted by disability – including parents of disabled children, spouses or partners to disabled individuals, caregivers of disabled friends or family members, and others.

Set Year 1 Goals and Objectives

Review other sections of the maturity model to identify what the ERG wants to accomplish in the first year. You don't have to accomplish everything all at once, so consider setting no more than 5 achievable goals for your first year to keep from becoming overwhelmed.

Here are some sample goals/objectives (not all will be year one goals):

- Partner with Talent Acquisition to help attract and support acquiring talent with diverse abilities.

- Enhance community impact by identifying and cultivating external strategic partnerships.

- Make the invisible visible by continuing to shape a culture of inclusion for people with diverse abilities along with their caregivers and advocates.

- Create awareness about [company's] responsibilities and obligations under the American with Disabilities Act.

- Create a greater sense of appreciation for employees and members of society who are disabled, including an awareness for how their unique challenges often translate to outstanding contributions, breakthrough thinking and competitive advantages for teams.

- Partner with Human Resources to develop and promote efforts that:
    - Recognize the value of the disabled community at [company],
    - Improve recruitment efforts, and define career guidance and opportunities for the disabled,
    - Promote the accomplishments of those who are disabled / with different abilities or talents,
    - Serve as a resource for employees, Human Resources, and the business to help identify ways to leverage special skills and/or develop specialized products and services.

- Sponsor thought provoking and informational sessions led by education specialists or occupational therapists about topical issues (i.e.: emerging technologies, trends, legislation, etc.) and foster open internal dialogue.

- Partner with internal and external organizations to:
    - Learn from experts in the field,
    - More fully support [company's] employees as individuals who have disabilities.
    - More fully support employees as caregivers of family member with a disability.
    - Positively represent [company] and its commitment to the disabled community.

- Look at funding sources; develop business plan to request funding.

- Your Diversity & Inclusion team may already have a pre-determined budget for each diversity BRG. If not, develop a business plan and estimated costs involved for year 1 activities and goals.

Identify Internal Stakeholders

Identifying internal stakeholders early allows you to identify their needs and expectations, which can prove helpful as you identify goals and priorities. This can also set the stage for clear communication, and to understand and effectively address stakeholder expectations or concerns.

Possible stakeholders include but are not limited to: DE&I, Safety, Talent Acquisition, Human Resources, Benefits, Accommodations, Supplier Diversity, Facilities, Product Developers, IT, Legal, Internal Communications, Marketing, External Vendors.

Identify Executives, Managers, and Employees Who are Disability Champions

While it may seem difficult to engage executives on the topic of disability, remember Sr. Leaders are people too; they have stories to tell and room to grow/learn more. ERG leaders need to be bold and not be afraid to have the conversations with them if they want to make progress.

Many diversity-focused ERGs have successful ally programs and you can expand your effectiveness and reach if you include Executives and Managers in your efforts.

Executive Sponsors

- Ensure Executive Sponsor is aligned with ERG (e.g., how they want to be involved, let them know how you want to partner with them, what you need from them, expectations of their role in support of the ERG).

- Engage Executive Sponsor to help open doors, remove barriers, and make connections throughout the organization:

  - Ask them to reach out to other leaders who may be able to speak about disability in the workplace.

  - Have them share information and events with their peers.

- Advocate to have scorecard to measure Executive Sponsor involvement/effectiveness.

- Ask Exec Sponsor to share business problems that need to be solved with ERG so diverse viewpoints on the problem can be considered as the solution is being developed.

- If Executive Sponsor is not engaging, provide an out so you can get someone who will actively engage/advocate (i.e., let them know you know they are busy and offer to give the opportunity to someone else who may have more time available).

Other Executive Leaders

- ERG Leaders can meet regularly (monthly, quarterly, annually) with Executive Sponsor, CEO and other "C" suite executives:

    - Have a discussion instead of just presenting,

    - Talk about initiatives (tangible results of past initiatives, ideas for future initiatives), support and/or resources needed from CEO, Executives, or others, what members need, "it would be helpful if…", and metrics.

    - Have discussion prior to company budgets being set in case monetary resources are needed for initiatives (e.g., accessibility review).

- Talk to your organization's leadership team about their goals and align ERG goals to support those efforts.

- Send year-end email to all managers highlighting ERG scope, results of initiatives during the year, and correlate to positive business outcomes.

- Listen to what leaders are talking about and use that information to invite them to speak or engage in some other way (e.g., leader talks about importance of taking vacation so ask to speak on the topic of the importance of self-care for mental health).

- Be specific about what the "ask is" when you are asking for leadership involvement.

- Identify Sr. leaders (EVP/C-Suite) who have a disability or are caregivers with a relatable story to promote efforts, speak at events, record supporting messages, and/or serve as Executive Sponsor.

- Invite leaders to participate in active allyship.

- Help leaders realize and acknowledge how they are included in DE&I and without their involvement, organizational goals are not met.

- Provide leaders with concrete examples of how the E/BRG is driving value for the business.

- Host workshops or focus groups with Sr. Leaders and employees with disabilities so leaders can learn more about both the value and needs of the population.

- Invite leaders to Disability:IN conference or other engagements where they can connect with other business leaders and better understand the value of the E/BRG and their inclusion efforts.

- Invite supervisors, manager, leaders, executives to the table. Some examples include:

  - Have them share information or allow E/BRG member to present at team meetings (e.g., E/BRG information, etiquette tips, resources),

  - Attend and actively participate in E/BRG events,

  - Become a member, committee chair, sponsor,

  - Coordinated efforts with their communications teams on inclusion campaigns,

  - Mentor steering committee members,

  - Ask where/how they would like to engage with speaking opportunities,

  - Ask leaders what ERG goals would align with and add value to the business,

  - Invite to an accessibility tour of the buildings to see areas that are/are not accessible.

- Ask E/BRG members to engage the manager/leaders in their line of business and to leverage their networks/relationships with leaders to inform, invite, and solicit support.

- Engage with Executive Assistants who manage calendars, so they understand the importance of leaders attending events.

Create Continuity Plan/Operating Manual In Case ERG Leaders Transfer/ Leave.

Hold ERG Membership Drives

Metric – ERG members/ERG membership growth rates (number/percent growth year over year)(percentage of overall employee base)

Formalized Stage

Gather Feedback from Leadership Regarding Expectations from ERG/BRG

Gather Feedback ERG Members

ERGs may consider surveying employees, as well as their members to help determine short term and long-term goals; however, you don't want to do a survey without considering what you hope to accomplish by conducting one. Some things to consider before you begin developing a survey include:

- The purpose of your survey/what you hope to accomplish.

- If a survey is the best way to obtain the information you want.

- If there is survey fatigue in your organization. When individuals are asked too often for feedback, the become less likely to participate.

- How much participation you need to make the results meaningful.

- How you will analyze your feedback (qualitative vs. quantitative).

- What data or information you need and why.

- How you will use the data collected (i.e., develop action plans/implement changes based on the feedback).

Sample survey questions may include:

- Rank what is most important to you to experience as a [ERG name] Employee Resource Group (ERG) member:
    - Networking
    - Employee Engagement
    - Volunteer Opportunities
    - Learning & Development
    - Leadership Development

- Have you ever joined an ERG before?

- If yes, which ones? [list your other ERGs – Veteran, Hispanic, Black, LGBTQ2+, Women, Millennials, etc.)

- How did you become interested in joining [ERG name]?

- I can achieve my career goals at [company] regardless of my disability.
    - Strongly agree
    - Agree
    - Neither agree nor disagree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly disagree

- I know someone who is finding employment to be difficult at [company] because of their disability.
    - True
    - False
    - (Comment Box)

- If I needed to discuss my disability with my leader, I would feel comfortable to do so.
    - True

- False
- (Comment Box)

- If I needed to discuss my disability with my leader, I would feel comfortable to do so.
  - True
  - False
  - (Comment Box)

- I know where to find information for team members who have disabilities or are a caregiver for someone who has a disability.
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
  - (Comment Box)

- I am able to balance work and personal life because of my disability or due to being a caregiver for someone who has a disability.
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
  - (Comment Box)

- If a network of people were available who have or know someone with disabilities, I would participate in events to connect, share experiences, and learn from one another.

  - Strongly agree

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

- Overall, I'm satisfied with how [company] creates an inclusive envrionment for individuals with disabilities.
    - Strongly agree
    - Agree
    - Neither agree nor disagree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly disagree
    - (Comment Box)

- If you could change one thing related to disability experiences at [company], what would it be?

    - (Comment Box)

- (For leaders) I have the appropriate resources and information to support my team members with disabilities or my team members who are caregivers of someone who has a disability.
    - Strongly agree
    - Agree
    - Neither agree nor disagree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly disagree
    - (Comment Box)

- What resources and / or reference materials either through [company] or outside of the company have you found useful?

- Human Resources SharePoint Site
- Employee Service Center
- Disability BRG SharePoint Site
- (Comment Box)

Develop Location/Region/Global ERGs

The purpose of this section is to provide guidance on how to expand your disability-focused E/BRG globally, and how to achieve synchronization & maintain alignment across chapters around the world.

What it means to "globalize" your E/BRG depends on your company's structure & culture. There is no single "right" way to do this. Here are several examples of ways you might globalize:

- Have a single virtual chapter that is global and open to colleagues from all countries, and work to engage colleagues from around the world in creating/hosting events & content.

- Stand up an E/BRG chapter in each region (e.g., Europe, Asia Pacific, Latin America).

- Stand up E/BRG chapters by language (e.g., Spanish-speaking, French-speaking, Chinese-speaking).

- Stand up an E/BRG chapter in each country.

- Stand up E/BRG chapters for the largest in-person office locations in states/cities around the world and keep a global virtual chapter open to everyone regardless of location.

These are just a few models. You may find that one model, a combination of them, or something else entirely, is what makes most sense for your organization.

Finally, remember that you don't have to move from having a single-location model to being "globalized" all at once. Adding additional chapters can take place over time.

Standing Up an E/BRG Chapter

Consider the following when standing up a new E/BRG chapter. Note that you can be successful without doing all these items.

- Factors to consider in deciding if it's a good environment to stand up a regional, country, state, or local E/BRG.

    - There is a need for more disability awareness or a gap in representation.

    - There are compliance needs in the country.

    - The size of population is large enough to support an E/BRG.

    - There is local interest in having an E/BRG. (Consider surveying the population to gauge interest.)

    - There are enough local individuals who have appropriate interest, knowledge, and influence to serve as chapter leaders/founders. Not all these roles are needed to start an E/BRG chapter, but some common roles to consider include chair, membership/recruiting, operations/admin, events & engagement, communications, volunteer, finance, social media, accommodations.

- **Consider terminology used in different countries (i.e., accommodations vs. adjustment). Refer to Disability:IN's Global Directory for more information.**

- **Identify a local executive sponsor.**

- **Encourage involvement of local leaders.**

- **Invite leaders/managers to serve as role models (as someone with a disability or as an ally).**

- **Ask leaders to advocate for inclusion and discuss its importance among peers and direct reports.**

- **Have leaders participate in disability panels, videos, and/or provide positive quotes supporting disability inclusion.**

- **Identify/nominate a local E/BRG lead/chair. Consider co-chairs to avoid burnout.**

- Develop a local marketing/communication strategy.

  - Have a stream of regular communications to employees and new members.

  - Identify internal network who can support execution of your strategy.

- Create kick-off event and a year 1 events calendar. (Disability:IN resources library has an annual calendar of disability awareness days/months). Consider if they need to align to other global/regional awareness events being scheduled across the organization.

- Develop a local resource repository. Be sure it also links to any regional/global resources.

- Ensure employees are aware of how to connect with the new chapter.

- Connect with global E/BRG to evaluate how to prioritize local initiatives and how they will tie into global strategies, priorities, and goals.

Connecting local E/BRG Plans to Global E/BRG Priorities

Once you have more than one E/BRG chapter in place, it's a good idea to consider how to establish alignment and coordination amongst chapters.

- Consider if it makes sense in your environment to have a "Global E/BRG Leadership Team" with local chapters, or if it makes sense to have a network of chapters that are all peer chapters.

- Work with your executive sponsor to help identify global priorities and connect with local leaders to sponsor local chapters and initiatives.

- Engage your company's DE&I team to identify guardrails and expectations for what it means to be an E/BRG in the company.

- Consider if you would like to have E/BRG chapters follow a cohesive global E/BRG branding.

- Create a global steering team/roundtable with regular meetings for collaborating on events, sharing information, and cross-communicating to prevent E/BRG events overload.

- Create a global shared calendar of awareness days and initiatives that all local E/BRGs can put their events into. Include awareness days and initiatives for other diverse groups so all E/BRGs can prioritize and support each other through collaboration and intersectional events. Share calendar with communications team so information is marketed to entire employee population.

- Identify roles and responsibilities of local vs. global leads. For example, consider developing a tiered model so each chapter knows where to focus their efforts. An example might be:

  - Tier 1: Initiatives that have global scope/impact are managed at the global steering committee level and they engage with key stakeholders at the global level (e.g., develop global E/BRG strategy, key priorities and high level goals that can be adapted regionally and locally, influencing improved digital accessibility across the organization, Global inclusion week events, E/BRG summit, develop themes for global inclusion days/months, promote events at all tier levels and provide information and/or resources so all tier levels can leverage what others are doing instead of duplicating effort).

  - Tier 2: Initiatives that have regional/business unit impact are managed at the regional/ country/state/business unit level (e.g., National/geographic-specific observances that are disability-related, engage business leaders within the region to influence inclusion). Also supports Tier 1 initiatives while customizing programming to meet regional/business unit needs.

  - Tier 3: Initiatives that have local impact are managed by the local state/city/office E/BRG chapters (e.g., establish local goals, local events, speakers, volunteer activities, E/BRG sub-groups, develop strategies on how best to engage different types of employees within the region such as manufacturing or retail). Also supports Tier 1 and Tier 2 initiatives while customizing programming to meet local needs.

Connecting E/BRG Members Across the Globe

One benefit of having multiple E/BRG chapters around the world is that it can help colleagues develop their internal global network. Here are some ideas for how to help members from different chapters connect:

- Build an online community/forum for members to share stories, questions, concerns – consider creating "seed topics" to initiate conversations.

- Use existing communication channels and workspaces to engage E/BRG members (i.e., MS Teams channels, Google chat/drive, Viva engage).

- Develop a portal/resource library for all employees to access resources related to disability inclusion, benefits, etc.

- Use breakout rooms during meetings to provide smaller group interactions.

- Host "Let's talk" sessions where E/BRG members can talk about a topic or to talk about whatever is on their mind.

- Identify hallmark events that will be celebrated/recognized across all regions/chapters (e.g., International Day of People with Disabilities, Disability Pride Month)

- Consider recording calls or taking notes so those who could not attend "live" can access the information.

- Turn off recordings for a portion of the meeting to create a safe space for members to ask questions, share more personal information, if they choose.

Engaging Local E/BRG Members

- Create a welcoming environment for new members.

  - Send an onboarding message to new members to let them know about resources, meetings, events calendar, etc.

  - Develop a buddy system to welcome new members to the group. Assign a buddy for the first few months that they are part of the group.

- Invite local members to participate in projects, task forces and focus groups that the E/BRG is driving.

- Develop a platform where EBRGs members can share ideas/initiatives.

- Encourage members to participate in hiring events.

- Invite members to serve in E/BRG leadership roles or to participate on a committee.

- Host events that are of interest to local members. Some examples include:

  - Viewing parties to bring local members together to attend global and regional events.

  - Local volunteer events.

  - Book clubs.

  - Mental health check-ins.

  - Discussions that would be of interest to affinity groups (i.e., ASL, caregivers, mental health).

  - Networking events where members are paired to have 1:1 time (coffee, lunch, etc.) to get to know each other.

Other Considerations

- Understand global/local legislative requirements, data privacy, physical and digital accessibility standards, etc. More information available in the Disability:IN Global Directory.

- Develop inclusive language guide with local disability terminology.

- Keep in mind that local chapters may not have the same level of influence when working with Corporate Departments. Think through where to best leverage local business leaders to drive disability inclusion efforts. For example, a local E/BRG working with a local IT team may or may not be the best place to start when trying to influence improved digital accessibility across the organization.

Disability ERG Case Study: Otis Worldwide Corporation

Otis' disability-focused employee resource group (ERG) was founded under the name All Abilities. Several years later, after spinning off from a parent company and collectively navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, the company observed that the ERG felt stagnant. It had fewer than 50 members and almost no participation outside of the U.S. – despite Otis having a global workforce of 69,000 employees, with more than 80% of colleagues based outside the U.S.

To re-energize the ERG, Otis identified a new executive sponsor and co-chair to bring new perspectives and to refocus and clarify the ERG's mission. The ERG was rebranded as the Otis Thrive ERG with the subtitle People with Disabilities, Caregivers, Mental Health and Wellbeing. "This new name helped us re-center on our target audiences and have a name and identity that is connected to our mission – helping all Otis colleagues and our company thrive," said Christy Vanek, Otis Global Accommodations & Accessibility Leader and Thrive ERG co-chair.

That year, the ERG leadership team invested their time in preparing for a global recognition of International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPWD), sponsored by the Otis Global Office of DE&I. In planning for this global recognition, they connected with HR colleagues from around the world who would assist in planning region-specific events. This was an important, early step towards collaboration across many regions and countries.

One member of the event's planning team was a Brazil-based HR business partner, who further connected the ERG leaders to an HR colleague based in Chile with a mobility disability. The original plan was to have this colleague speak on a multi-regional fireside chat panel.

Ambitions expanded when he expressed interest in starting a Thrive ERG chapter in Latin America. Because Otis also has a strong presence in Brazil, the conversation quickly evolved to starting two Latin America chapters: One in Brazil that would include Portuguese language content and events, and the other for the rest of Latin America that would build content and events in Spanish. These two ERG chapters formed leadership teams in December as part of IDPWD, launching with a campaign to attract members in the first half of the following year.

The events held around the world for this celebration helped promote the ERG and attract new members from multiple countries to join the U.S. chapter (which operates virtually). Otis now refers to this chapter as a global chapter that is U.S.-based but open to all.

"I am continually impressed by the authentic passion and power of our ERGs to make a positive impact on our core business. This potential for impact blossoms when we encourage global participation and nurture chapters and leadership teams around the world," said Aditi Sant, Otis Corporate Real Estate Leader and Thrive ERG global executive sponsor.

And there is more: Thrive ERG leaders heard from HR colleagues in the United Kingdom (UK) who were beginning to see grassroots interest from local colleagues in having a wellbeing ERG. By connecting with them early, Thrive leaders were able to influence them to create a chapter of Thrive instead of a standalone wellbeing ERG. The UK chapter launched later that year. Otis Thrive leaders also are engaged in early-stage conversations with their HR colleagues in several more countries across Europe and Asia Pacific.

"In this stage of expansion, we have chosen to give each chapter significant autonomy and space for localization, leveraging standards governing all Otis ERGs as the guardrails. Beyond this, we encourage only a few other elements of standardization: the Thrive name, branding and mission; and the intersectional focus on disability, caregiving, mental health, and wellbeing," said Christy.

"We were able to build on the great foundations from the global chapter and customize for our specific needs in the UK. We focused on establishing a strong and positive chapter leadership team to set us up for success and sustainability in forthcoming years. This is a journey for us all, and we embrace the opportunity to make a difference every day." said Adam Watkinson, Otis Modernization Sales Director and Thrive ERG UK co-chair.

To close out the year, Thrive will bring all chapter leaders together virtually to engage in cross-chapter sharing of successes and alignment of plans for next year. As they continue their globalization journey, they plan to establish a regular cadence of global connectivity across chapters and continued expansion to new markets.

Otis Thrive ERG leaders' advice for a globalization journey

- Have a clear ERG mission that is widely attractive, globally relevant, and connected to your business.

- Open your existing virtual chapter to colleagues from anywhere in the world.

- Leverage IDPWD, and other global or local days of disability recognition, as an opportunity to attract members to your current chapters.

- Engage with global and regional HR, as well as your Office of DE&I, to stay connected to organic and emerging opportunities for new chapters.

- Be patient – with others and also with yourselves. This is a journey.

Additional Resources

- [Disability Inclusion Global Best Practices Report](#)

- [Global Directory](#)

Develop Support/Awareness Groups within Disability ERG

Within Disability focused BRGs there is an overarching commonality of members, but much diversity within its membership which adds a level of complexity when organizing your BRG to be able to achieve your BRG's goals and support the needs of employees with different disabilities, as well as parents and caregivers.

Most organizations have a single disability BRG that focuses on broader disability inclusion. Within the disability BRG, if groups of employees with similar disabilities or caregivers are interested in supporting the overall BRG goals as a group, subgroups have been formed. Some of these subgroups include: caregivers of children with disabilities, elder care, learning disabilities, mental health, autism, vision and hearing, down syndrome. These groups will start to emerge as the BRG continues to grow.

Operational Stage

- Have dedicated staff member(s) focused on operation of ERG/BRG related to disability inclusion (may have responsibility for multiple ERG/BRGs within the company).

- Have representation from disability ERG/BRG on company's diversity council.

- Conduct regular pulse surveys for ERG/BRG (needs, concerns).

- Create advisory group within ERG/BRG to assist with business questions related to disability/accessibility.

- Develop succession plan for ERG/BRG leadership.

Integrated Stage

- Establish ERG/BRG governance for how stakeholders work together with the ERG/BRG

Dynamic Stage

- Integrate ERG/BRG access throughout the stakeholders' processes and programs.

Workforce: Talent/Employees

Foundational Stage

- Establish connections with Talent acquisition, HR, and accommodations team

- Participate/influence in communicating the company's commitment to hiring people with disabilities, on internal and external sites.

- Examples of websites to showcase how companies are talking about their commitment to disability hiring:
    - PG&E – Accessibility to the Interview Process
    - Raytheon – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
    - Booz Allen Hamilton
        - Supporting People with Disabilities at Booz Allen – Booz Allen Hamilton
        - Be Yourself at Work and Boost Your Career – Booz Allen Hamilton
        - Why Hiring Military Veterans is Smart Business – Booz Allen Hamilton
    - Catalent – Diversity & Inclusion – Catalent
    - RSM – https://rsmus.com/about/dei.html

- Identify career development resources & activities

- Increase awareness and application rate of people with disabilities by participating in disability fora and events to "signal" interest and encourage higher application rates

Formalized Stage

Partner with Talent Acquisition Team to Advance Hiring and Onboarding Candidates with Disabilities.

Talent Acquisition (TA) teams are focused on finding, hiring and onboarding talent. They aren't typically experts on disability inclusion and may not understand the value of including disability as part of their hiring strategy. E/BRGs can play a critical role in ensuring Talent Acquisition and hiring teams have the necessary knowledge and skills to find and engage talent with disabilities. This resource provides ideas on how E/BRGs can be an asset to, and partner with, their Talent Acquisition teams to improve disability inclusion hiring initiatives. This may include actions such as providing information regarding hiring requirements, conducting disability etiquette training, providing feedback on potential gaps in the hiring process that impacts candidates with disabilities, or helping them build a talent pipeline.

Legal Considerations

This information is provided to help assist you in finding the legal resources that apply to your geographical area of the US or around the Globe. Please remember that this is not intended to be legal advice. Instead, this is meant to serve as a guide to help you think about legal considerations and where you can find legal resources for your area of need. **Laws are constantly changing, and it is recommended that you consult with your legal advisor(s).**

Hiring Requirements

- US Federal Requirements. Some states and cities may also have hiring requirements.

  - AskEARN: Inclusive Hiring: Applicable Laws and Regulations – Learn about US federal laws and regulations that impact the hiring process.

  - Government contractors – Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 covers hiring, self-IDand accommodation requirements for US government contractors/subcontractors.

- Global Requirements

    - Some countries have a minimum requirement for hiring people with disabilities; important to remind TA to familiarize themselves with local requirements.

    - Global directory – includes disability information such as definitions, legislation, cultural norms, etc.

What can be discussed regarding disability during the interview process.

Scheduling interviews – Best practice is to ask all candidates if any accommodation/adjustments are needed to be able to participate in the interview process.

- Since many disabilities are not visible the topic generally doesn't come up unless the candidate discloses it.

- Can ask if the candidate is able to perform the essential functions of the job with or without accommodations/adjustments.

- In general, you cannot and should not ask questions about the nature of someone's disability. In many countries, it is not legal to ask.

- May say things like: We want this interview process to be the best possible process for you, do you need a drink of water or anything else before we begin; for virtual meetings: do you prefer to have their camera on or off; our company is inclusive and we have an accommodation process so let us know if anything is needed during the interview process.

US laws related to non-discrimination, accommodations, definition of disability and privacy of health information.

- Health Insurance Portability And Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) – Health information privacy.

- Americans with Disabilities Act – Non-discrimination, accommodations, and definition of disability

- Some U.S. states may also have laws related to non-discrimination, accommodations, and/or privacy. (i.e., New York, California)

Accomodations

- Accommodations should be part of the framework throughout the hiring and employment process.

- Best practice is to ask if any accommodations/adjustments are needed as part of the interview process, and prior to onboarding so employee has needed resources and equipment ready on their first day.

- Employer's Practical Guide to Reasonable Accommodations during the hiring process

- Job Accommodation Network – publications and resources on accommodations (policies and procedures, accommodation examples, etc.).

- AskEARN: Ensuring Accessibility in the Recruitment Process – Assess your workplace to ensure its doors, including virtual doors, are open to all applicants.

Laying the Groundwork: Pre-Sourcing

Are both your organization's culture and TA team ready to start proactively including individuals with disabilities into their hiring efforts? Below are some examples of how ERGs can work (as an internal consultant) with TA partners and other stakeholders within your organization to lay the groundwork needed for disability inclusive hiring initiatives. This list is not meant to be all-inclusive, rather is meant to help E/BRG leaders begin thinking about what teams within your own organization can positively impact the successful hiring, onboarding, and retention of individuals with disabilities.

- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I)**

  - Partner to help drive inclusive culture, provide disability inclusion and etiquette training for employees, engage leaders in establishing hiring goals.

- **Real Estate & Facilities**

  - Help assess accessibility of parking, office spaces, restrooms, and other facilities used during the interviewing process (and beyond) are accessible.

- Some U.S. states may also have laws related to non-discrimination, accommodations, and/or privacy. (i.e., New York, California)

- **IT**: Provide feedback on accessibility of websites and systems or other applications used by employees (including hiring software).

- **Hiring Managers**: Provide a safe space for managers to ask questions about disabilities; offer to speak about disability inclusion at team meetings or to provide basic etiquette training; ensure they know the accommodations process.

- **HR/Benefits**: Offer feedback on benefits offerings to ensure they are supportive of individuals with disabilities.

- **Communications Team**: Work with corporate communications to ensure external-facing websites, social media posts are accessible and have representation from the disability community.

- **Talent Acquisition**: The rest of this resource is focused on partnering with your Talent Acquisition team so candidates with disabilities can have good hiring and onboarding experiences and the organization can improve their disability hiring.

Prepare to Engage with your TA Team

- Create a culture of belonging. It is important to have a broad disability friendly culture before any targeted employment program is implemented.

- Assess the effectiveness of your processes by participating in the [Disability:IN Disability Equality Index (DEI).](#)

- Review DEI best practices for hiring that can be found at: [DEI-Employment Practices](#).

- Understand whether there is a process in place to effectively handle candidate requests for accommodations (i.e., ASL interpreter, a printed copy of questions ahead of time).

- Invite recruiting teams attend ERG fairs and events to learn more about disabilities.

- Prepare to share the business case for disability inclusive hiring with the TA team.

- [Business Case for Disability Inclusion](#)

- Added diversity of thought for greater innovation

- Be ready to share stories of successful disability hiring initiatives.

  - [Microsoft Neurodiversity Hiring program](#)

  - [Walgreens Transitional Work Program and Retail Employees with Disabilities initiatives](#)

Tips for Getting Invited to the TA Table

- ERG needs to take the initiative to establish a relationship with TA for recruiting with hiring from internship to Sr. level positions; Pick up the phone, send an email set up a meeting, and/or use networks to make introductions to TA.

- Determine if disability hiring is on their radar; understand TA goals and priorities to see how disability hiring efforts fit.

- Find out if TA has someone on the team who is responsible for diverse/disability focused hiring who you could help drive disability inclusion efforts. If not, is there someone on the team who has a passion for it who could work with you?

- Share how disability intersects with other diverse hiring goals.

- Showcase how ERG can support TA staff that is focused on disability hiring.

- Offer to audit the entire hiring and onboarding process (apply with screen reader, request accommodations for interviews, do mock interviews, complete new hire forms and training courses, etc.) to see how well the hiring process is working for candidates with disabilities and suggest improvements.

Help TA Understand the Unique Challenges and Opportunities of Hiring Candidates with Disabilities

- Remind TA team that all candidates have different skills and experience that they bring with them, including those with disabilities.

- Talk to the team regarding accommodation needs during the interview process and the importance of having a process in place for responding to candidate requests.

- Provide training and/or other resource materials (see training section of this TA resource).

- Educate them on proper/improper language.

- Share examples of successful disability owned businesses (DOBE program). If individuals with disabilities are able to run their own businesses, they can also make great employees. Information on Disability:IN's Supplier Diversity program can be found at: https://disabilityin.org/what-we-do/supplier-diversity/. You can find posts spotlighting DOBEs by searching the Supplier Diversity/ Procurement category of Disability IN's blog found at: https://disabilityin.org/news-events/blog/.

Partrner with TA to Capitalize on their Campus Networks

- Provide information to the TA team so they can more easily connect with individuals who work with disabled students during campus visits.

- Share Disability Service Center on campuses of your targeted Colleges and Universities. These are listed on campus websites.

- Universities with dedicated programs.

    - Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)

    - United States College Programs for Autistic Students Published by the College Autism Network; lists colleges across the US with programs that specifically serve autistic college students.

- Work with TA to develop a campus events toolkit that includes job opportunities, ERG information, and other company information that would be valuable to students with disabilities (toolkit contents may vary depending on informational vs. hiring events). Help ensure all of the information in the toolkit is accessible (i.e., large print copies, collateral materials are accessible).

Idenitfy Possible Barriers to Accessibility

- Check to see if communications are accessible, inclusive, and welcoming.

- Recruiting materials should be inclusive to attract candidates. Resources include:

  - Disability:IN stock photography

  - Disability inclusive posters & social graphics and illustrations

  - Webinar recording: Best Practices for Accessible, Inclusive Communications

- Assess digital accessibility throughout the hiring and onboarding process.

  - Career websites and job applications need to be accessible.

  - AskEARN: Ensuring Accessibility in the Recruitment Process – Assess your workplace to ensure its doors, including virtual doors, are open to all applicants.

  - AskEARN – Job Seeker Observations of Company Websites

  - JAN – Digital/Web Accessibility

  - Onboarding information, forms, and videos need to be accessible.

  - Assessment tools need to be accessible

  - Virtual interview platforms need to be accessible.

    - Six Tips to Keep In Mind When Creating Accessible Virtual Meetings

    - Creating Accessible Digital Microsoft Teams Meetings

    - Creating Accessible Digital Zoom Meetings

- Evaluate physical accessibility for on-site interviews.

  - Work in partnership with internal facilities and/or corporate real estate teams to assess physical location of interviews, including parking and building access.

  - AskEARN: Ensuring Accessibility in the Recruitment Process – Assess your workplace to ensure its doors, including virtual doors, are open to all applicants.

  - Have process in place to consider needs of those who have service animals (i.e., check for any barriers to having the service animal, pet relief areas, ability to take breaks, do others have allergies that need to be considered)

- Consider attitudinal barriers.

  - Review current job descriptions. (machinery, working in heights, lifting requirements, other physical requirements)

  - Examine job descriptions through a disability lens – removing ableist and unnecessary job "requirements".

  - AskEARN – https://askearn.org/page/job-descriptions

    - Job Description Checklist

  - JAN – https://askjan.org/topics/jobdesc.cfm?csSearch=3943631_1

- Work to create a process for when ERG members notice something missing or unnecessary in a job description/position so it can be reviewed.

- Personality testing can disproportionately impact candidates with disabilities. Encourage use of skills assessments rather than behavioral or psychometric.

Highlight Commitment to Hiring People with Disabilities Externally

- Examples of websites to showcase how companies are talking about their commitment to disability hiring:
    - PG&E – [Accessibility to the Interview Process](#)
    - Raytheon – [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)
    - Booz Allen Hamilton
        - [Supporting People with Disabilities at Booz Allen – Booz Allen Hamilton](#)
        - [Be Yourself at Work and Boost Your Career – Booz Allen Hamilton](#)
        - [Why Hiring Military Veterans is Smart Business – Booz Allen Hamilton](#)
    - Catalent – [Diversity & Inclusion – Catalent](#)
    - RSM – https://rsmus.com/about/dei.html

- Leverage CEO's are 'IN' for Disability Inclusion if your CEO has signed on – CEO Letter.

- ERG members can serve as Company brand ambassadors at career fairs, campus visits, etc.

Provide Disability Etiquette Training and Resources

- Consider development of a TA Quick Reference Sheet that includes etiquette basics, key takeaways TA team can always have with them, and where they can find resources if they need more support (i.e., how to connect with the ERG).

- Recommend disability inclusion and etiquette training or provide etiquette resources to Talent Acquisition teams, campus recruiters, brand ambassadors, and hiring managers.

    - Infographic: [Global Disability & Employment](#)

    - [Disability Etiquette – A Starting Guide](#)

    - Video – [Unconscious Biases: Shattering Assumptions and Surprising Ourselves](#)

    - [AskEARN: Microsoft: Preparing Recruiters to Interview Job Candidates with Disabilities](#)

- On-line Manager training – [Disability Fundamentals Training for Managers](#)

- Don't' be scared to talk about disabilities - https://www.npr.org/2022/02/18/1081713756/disability-disabled-people-offensive-better-word

- Demystifying Disability - https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/646508/demystifying-disability-by-emily-ladau/

Engage the Business in Supporting Disability Hiring Programs

Invite guest speakers to talk about neurodiversity and invite hiring managers to attend.

Reconize Inclusion Champions

Work with DE&I team to host an annual event to recognize/award managers and employees who have supported allyship and inclusion.

Engage and Encourage Community Partnerships

Invite TA teams, hiring managers, and employees to partnership events at non-profit organizations that ERGs members are already associated with.

Sourcing/Interviewing

After ERG's have established relationships with TA and hiring teams and have worked to create a welcoming environment, the focus can turn to how candidates are sourced and moved into the interviewing pipeline. Keep in mind, this doesn't have to be a linear process and sourcing connections can be made while still laying the groundwork. There are several ways ERGs can continue partnering with their TA teams to ensure the talent pipeline includes individuals with disabilities and the interviewing processes are inclusive and accessible.

- Help build a robust pipeline of disabled candidates at all levels (not just entry level)

  - Connect with Disability:IN's NextGen Leaders and inform the TA team about the resume database.

- ERGs can offer suggestions on where to find candidates in local area if there are organizations that ERG members already work with.

- Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation - The National Employment Team (NET) is a network of vocational rehabilitation programs across the US that helps companies create a coordinated approach to finding candidates.

- Neurodiversity Career Connector – a collection of employers committed to neurodiversity-focused hiring initiatives developed a site for employers and talent to connect.

- Hiring Veterans with disabilities.

  - AskEARN: Disabled Veterans - Understand how your organization can benefit from sourcing and recruiting veterans with disabilities.

- Trade Schools/Apprenticeship programs.

  - US Dept. of Labor Apprenticeship Toolkit – includes information on veteran and disability inclusion

  - Apprenticeship.gov - A web-based no-cost tool that allows employers to promote apprenticeships in their industries and offers career seekers a platform to search for apprenticeships by city, state, and occupation.

- ERGs can collaborate with TA on recruiting events such as speed resume critique events, executive-level work expos where candidates come in and apply for jobs, as well as campus recruiting events and career fairs.

- ERGs can invite TA to participate in external events that aren't necessarily related to hiring but would signal interest in hiring people with disabilities.

- Neurodiversity Hiring Programs – best practices and lessons learned from those who have implemented programs. Consider harnessing enthusiasm and support around neurodiversity programs to strengthen overall hiring strategy (i.e., bettering hiring processes for non-apparent disabilities and other ERG groups such as veterans & pride).

- Neurodiversity in Business (NiB) is a business-led forum functioning as an industry group for organizations to share industry good practice on ND recruitment, retention and empowerment. https://neurodiversityinbusiness.org/

- Interview tips for Applicants with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) https://askjan.org/publications/consultants-corner/vol10iss01.cfm

- Autism @ Work Playbook - The Autism @ Work Playbook is the product of a collaborative research project, Autism-Ready Workplace: Creating and Sustaining Autism Hiring Initiatives, led by Dr. Hala Annabi, an associate professor at the University of Washington Information School. To create this guide, the ACCESS-IT Research Group at the Information School studied the Autism @ Work programs of four leading employers: Microsoft, SAP, JPMorgan Chase and EY.

- Framework for Neurodiversity at Work Pilots - From Inclusion Works, this resource is an overview of a four-step framework covering Internal Planning - From Inclusion Works, this resource is an overview of a four-step framework covering Internal Planning, Scope and Employment Modeling, Internal Training, and Recruiting and Sourcing Talent for a more neurodiverse workforce. Includes a list of consulting companies that can assist with Autism Hiring Programs

- Neurodiversity@Work roundtable success stories:

  - Unique job site can help neurodivergent people find meaningful work

  - Ford program focuses on hiring people with autism

  - JP Morgan Chase's Autism at Work program opens doors for those on the spectrum

- Provide resources on how to perform disability-inclusive and accessible interviews; keep in mind technical considerations and accommodation options.

- Ask all candidates—regardless of whether or not they have an apparent disability—if they can perform the essential functions of the job, with or without an accommodation.

- Provide a welcoming and relaxed approach, and if the applicant has a visible disability or reveals a disability during the interview, concentrate on the person's ability to perform the job, not their disability.

- Ask only job-related questions that speak to the functions of the job the candidate is applying for.

- Talk about our company's commitment to diversity/disability and inclusion and how this is personally important to you.

- Focus on ability, not disability. Do not underestimate what someone with a disability can do. Remember, you are selecting them based on their job performance not their skills at interviewing.

- Consider giving the candidate an opportunity to demonstrate how they would perform the job if it is not clear from their work history or self-description of how they would meet the requirements.

- If requested, provide an option to answer questions in writing vs. verbally.

- Simplify or break down questions.

- Conduct the interview in a quiet/low distraction environment.

- Focus on the critical skills needed for success in the role vs. nice to have skills.

- If requested, provide enabling tools/resources such as screen readers, and interpreters etc., during the interview.

- Focus on ability to do the job vs. interviewing skills, and explore how a person could fulfill an important role or address an unmet need, consider thinking outside the box vs. the way we have traditionally done things.

- [How to Interview Without Violating the ADA](#)

- [Six Tips to Keep In Mind When Creating Accessible Virtual Meetings](#)

- [Creating Accessible Digital Microsoft Teams Meetings](#)

- [Creating Accessible Digital Zoom Meetings](#)

Internships

Internship Programs are opportunities for students, currently enrolled in a college/university, to experience a learning opportunity with extensive overviews of different industries to apply their skills to a future career. Internships are a way that some companies introduce diverse candidates to hiring managers who may not have worked with individuals with disabilities previously. One of the many goals to having an internship program is to enhance a pool of qualified candidates to meet future hiring needs. Another goal is to promote the company as an employer of choice at college campuses.

- Identify potential barriers to including students with disabilities in the existing internship program (age, target schools, where to find them).

- Starting internships for communities with disabilities.

    - Refer to resources in sourcing/interviewing section above regarding college recruiting and trade schools.

- [AskEARN: Maximizing the Internship Experience for Interns with Disabilities](#) – Explore the four components of a successful internship program for students with disabilities

- [AskEARN: Tips for Mentoring a Student Intern Who Has a Disability](#) – A practical guide to supporting student interns with disabilities.

- [AskEARN: Internships and Apprenticeships](#) – Explore how work-based learning opportunities can help you build a diverse pipeline of talent.

- Examples of companies with internship programs:

    - Booz Allen Hamilton – [Summer Games internship program](#) includes students with disabilities.

Onboarding/Mentorships

The onboarding experience needs to support all new employees, not just some of them. This is the first opportunity a company has to showcase new employees their inclusive culture and commitment to disability inclusion.

Ensure onboarding is accessible

- New hire forms need to be in an accessible format.
- Onboarding portal needs to be accessible.
- Training videos need to be accessible (i.e., captioning, audio descriptions, transcripts)

Inform New Employees of Resources Avialable to Them

- Include ERG information during orientation. If there are slides or an orientation guide, be sure to include information about your E/BRG and how to get connected.

- Send welcome email to all new employees regarding ERGs.

- Share benefits information that would be useful to employees with disabilities (i.e., caregiver benefits, hearing aids, mental health resources).

- Consider mentioning how to Self-ID.

- Ensure evacuation procedures that includes inclusive language is included as part of onboarding (i.e., someone may not be able to duck under a desk or take the stairs).

- Provide information regarding any mentor/buddy program in place.

Mentor Programs

Mentor programs connect employees seeking career development advice with mentors who are looking to improve their leadership skills. Mentoring programs are also opportunities for employees to assist with the onboarding of new hires with disabilities. Employees are partnered to help provide a resource to help with acclimation to a new working environment and how to succeed in an existing work environment.

- [Mentorship Best Practices](). Includes mentoring plan and suggested activities, mentor tips, and tips for mentoring individuals with disabilities.

- Consider Managers as mentors. Develop TA Checklist/Plan that is completed by every new employee and their manager. The stigma of having a plan with TA could be a little overwhelming for some so make it an expectation for all new hires, not just those with disabilities. Checklist/plan could include:

    - Employee and supervisor agree to meet at least two times through zoom or through face-to-face to share methods of communication, learning styles, visual Styles, report-Out/Status Styles, etc.

    - Career goals questions and roles & responsibilities accountability and authority of what the employee should expect before starting on day one.

Metrics

Establishing key performance indicators is essential to partnering with your talent acquisition team because what gets measured gets done. If you want to advance your disability inclusion efforts, it is essential the data measures leading indicators and is readily available to key stakeholders.

Some examples of relevant KPIs that will help you establish a talent acquisition strategy include understanding your talent pipeline; establishing hiring goals; and measuring performance against D&I goals. Encourage use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to evaluate sourcing and hiring strategies being used.

- Suggest TA look at metrics related to pipeline, utilization, and hiring rates and how to use them (i.e., by business unit, department, job levels).

    - Hiring numbers by BU or dept can help identify where more inclusion training may be needed or other cultural barriers need to be removed.

    - Sharing data with managers helps them understand what needs to be done to improve the hiring numbers.

- Advise on use of hiring goals in manager performance appraisals.

- Consider surveying new hires to see how the process worked for them.

- Work with HR/DE&I team on the development of Internal Transparency Report to measure metrics and goals to improve hiring efforts.

Additional Resources & Strategies

- [AskEARN: Hiring Strategies for Specific Sectors and Industries](#) - Understand special considerations for federal contractors, federal agencies, state employers and small businesses/Webinar Recordings: in the United States for hiring people with disabilities.

- Encourage employees with disabilities to self-disclose to help remove stigmas around disabilities in the workplace

- Offer to train or assist HR on handling situations that may arise

- Drive development of and/or support self-ID campaign for underrepresented groups and ensure that disability is included

Self-ID Campaigns: Resources for E/BRG Leaders

A company can't measure how they are doing hiring, retaining, and promoting employees with disabilities unless they know the representation of that population within their workforce. Many companies hold self-id campaigns and often, those efforts are led by an organization's Diversity & Inclusion team or perhaps by a compliance team. Even though ERGs may not lead these efforts, they play a critical role in the success of Self-ID campaigns. These resources include tips and best practices E/BRGs leaders may want to consider as they support self-id campaigns (or want to encourage starting a campaign) within their own organizations.

Self-ID Campaign Roles and Responsibilities

Below are examples of possible roles/responsibilities for self-ID campaigns. They may be slightly different from organization to organization, but this gives an idea of what responsibilities may look like.

- **Compliance team** – Understand globally if there are government reporting and/or workforce representation/hiring quota requirements and responsible for submitting appropriate data to government agencies. Define how questions for campaign are formatted.

- **HR** - Depending on the organizational structure, HR could be the leader of the campaign communication strategy. Play strong role in advocating for the campaign and being a resource to answer questions.

- **HR Information Systems (HRIS)** - Design and maintain system used to collect data. Provide reports to the compliance team and other stakeholders for analysis.

- **Global Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion** - If an organization has a DE&I team/leader, they would be the sponsor to drive the self-campaign strategy.

- **ERG/BRG** - Partner at the table helping make decisions with those driving the campaign, a voice representing the ERG members, promoters of the campaign bringing an authentic voice to the campaign. Be participants to complete campaign. Resource for questions from employees and share concerns. ERG/BRG Leaders should be equipped with answers to employee questions.

- **Legal / Data Privacy Team**– Review and provide feedback on campaign materials. Advise on questions, process, and how can the data be utilized once it is collected so that it protects the privacy of respondents. This will depend on how the data is collected and what Personal Identifiable Information is collected with the responses.

- **Leadership** - Communicate and support the campaign. Articulate from a business perspective of why it is important to have employees self-identify.

- **Communications Team** – Partner to help design and execute the campaign.

- **Talent Acquisition** –   Support self-identification from the recruitment of candidates filling out the information on the application. Engage employees during the on-boarding process to self-identify at the start of their employment.

Self-Disclosure vs. Self-ID

Often the terms self-disclosure and self-ID are used interchangeably; however, in this resource we will be focused on self-ID, which is where employees "check a box" on a form vs. self-disclosure, which is when a person shares their disability information to other people.

How companies have separated self-disclosure vs. self-ID:

- Self-ID is typically positioned that the information collected is used to help the company know what the employees need.

- Some U.S. government contractors, who are required to collect disability data, have conducted both self-ID using the [required government form](#) and self-disclosure (DEI Survey) together. In those cases, the companies have found self-disclosure form completion rate to be much higher than self-id campaign form.

Benefits and Potential Disadvantages to Self-ID

Perceived benefits and disadvantages for employees to self-ID are not binary as they will depend on the individual and whether they identify as having a disability, as well as their work environment and the overall company culture. It may not be surprising that self-ID participation will swing toward being beneficial to employees when they feel the company will use the self-ID data in positive or supportive ways. Often, employees are concerned with how the data may be used so that is something that needs to be considered in the communications about self-ID.

For companies, there really isn't a downside to collecting self-ID information to better understand their workforces. Information collected can be used to influence hiring, benefits and programs that further disability inclusion (refer to metrics).

Definition of "Disability" for the Purposes of Self-ID

The definition of disability is often broader than what people think it is. Additionally, the medical or legal definition of disability may not always align with whether someone identifies as having a disability (i.e., cancer survivor). Here are some things to keep in mind as you look to define disability for the purposes of self-ID:

- Government contractors in the US are limited in how they define disability due to government requirements. See Checklist for Compliance with Section 503 for more information.

- Global nomenclature will vary by country. Visit the Disability:IN Global Directory for definition of disability by country. Working with global ERG leads can also help frame the definition to ensure a global lens.

- Sometimes people believe they are "not disabled enough" to say they're disabled in the Self-ID campaign, so your definition and/or messaging needs to resonate with them in a way that they understand if their disability is within your definition for self-ID.

- Another challenge may be connecting with those who are early in their diagnosis and may still be processing and are not quite ready to identify as having a disability during a self-ID campaign. That's ok...as an E/BRG, continue to create a safe space for everyone regardless of where they are in their decision to self-ID.

How E/BRGs can propose and help drive the success of self-ID campaigns

- E/BRGs leaders can be ambassadors for their members so they can carry the call to action through their different networks and business engagements.

- Consider collaborating or holding joint campaigns with other ERGs who already self-ID (race, gender, veteran status, LGBTQ+) to raise the idea that diversity inclusion is not full inclusion without disability inclusion.

  - Every employee is multi-dimensional and giving an opportunity to identify in all diverse categories may message to employees that it is a safe place to bring all aspects of yourself to work.

  - Joining efforts can have better results (synergistic) as it could engage a broader audience, helps spread the work, and individuals will only have to go into the system once to select all areas in which they identify.

  - Everyone benefits from being able to bring their whole selves to work (disability, veteran, LGBTQ+, etc.).

- Communicate through all means possible. (i.e., webpage, blogs, newsletters, videos, posters, computer login screen).

- E/BRG member videos or podcasts talking about why self-ID is important to them personally, why it's important to the company, and a call to action.

- Consider holding campaign during Disability Employment Awareness Month or other disability awareness day and host a panel of DEI, Leaders, ERG members, Disability:IN, other external speakers to talk about disability inclusion and the importance of self-ID. Discussion topics could include:
  - What is a disability,
  - Employee with disability sharing why they chose to join your company to build their career,
  - Where to go for resources and accommodations,
  - The importance of allyship to ERGs and the organization,
  - Leadership's commitment to disability inclusion,
  - Why employees should participate in self-ID.

- Consider holding campaign during annual benefits enrollment when employees are already going into your systems to enter information.

- Identify disability inclusion champions who are part of the leadership team, starting with your ERG Executive Sponsor and provide them with the information needed to propose and/or support the ERGs proposal to begin self-id for candidates and employees with disabilities.

ERGs can encourage participation & help employees overcome concerns about participating in Self-ID

- Build Trust
  - Share how data will be used/confidentiality of data.
  - Clearly communicate who has access to the information and how it is being used.

- Create a welcoming and inclusive culture so employees feel more comfortable when asked to self-disclose/self-id.

- Consider sharing stories of how self-ID data has been or can be beneficial to individuals with disabilities and the company.

- Answer the question "What's in it for me?"

  - The information helps the company become aware of and address gaps in resources and support for all, such as physical/digital accessibility needs, mental/behavior health options, etc.

  - Can highlight the need for more diversity and representation in hiring, recruiting and talent development/management specifically in leadership.

  - Promotes positive change in disability inclusion and support.

  - Drives improvement to accommodation processes.

  - Informs health & welfare benefit needs.

  - Focus campaigns on the employee and talk about them having the opportunity to really shape the workforce future.

  - Allows company to understand demographic information (see metrics).

  - Helps your company secure and/or continue to hold government contracts.

- Tie Self-ID to disability pride, along with storytelling; focusing on disability pride has the potential to be very powerful.

- Find more tips in the Best Practices for Self-Identification resource.

Employee Testimonials Can Encourage Employees to Self-ID

- Employee testimonials can be a very powerful tool to use to help other employees feel more comfortable with self-ID. They can come from ERG members, allies, other employees with disabilities and/or caretakers.

- Testimonials could be shared as quotes on a website or newsletter, employee blog posts, podcasts or short videos.

- Testimonial topics could include experience as an E/BRG leader or E/BRG member, why self-ID is important to them, company resources that have helped them (accommodation, benefits, flexibility, caretaker resources, etc.), personal experiences of inclusion at the company.

- Testimonials should be a sincere statement from the employee but sometimes they would like an idea of what you are looking for so here are some sample testimonial quotes:

  - I choose to self-ID because it helps me shape a more inclusive narrative, sets an example for the next generation of equitable leaders, and uplifts the voices of so many communities who have been historically left behind.

  - I choose to self-ID because it is important to me to share, show, and demonstrate that it is okay to be who you are and to take pride in it. I think this allows others to be open and start to feel comfortable to do the same.

  - I choose to self-ID because self-identifying helps promote an inclusive culture to ensure everyone can show up as their professional whole selves without judgement.

  - I choose to self-ID because I want to give other courage to be themselves by taking the first step and being open about my own identity.

  - I choose to self-ID because leadership matters, and we need role models, strong mentors, advocates, and visible disabled leaders to create an even more impactful and inclusive culture.

  - I choose to self-ID because it will help us better evaluate current policies and procedures, facilitate further dialogues, and determine the next steps toward full inclusion.

Senior Leadership Support

- We all know the importance of having senior leaders self-disclose, but many only disclose if they are caregivers. Having leaders discuss being a caretaker or ally is still important and can start a culture shift to help de-stigmatize disability. Of course, it is even more impactful to engage any leaders who identify as having a disability. Consider engaging leaders in fireside chats, videos, written messaging, or having discussion with other leaders.

- Leverage existing relationships to get introduced to executives. Then you can engage those leaders through relationship building, networking, facilitating awareness and focusing on strengths and opportunities.

Campaign Slogans

- When determining a slogan, be sure it would fit within your company culture and other inclusion efforts taking place within your organization. Sample slogans include:
    - This is Me
    - Count Me In
    - #iCount
    - Diversity Works
    - Proudly Me
    - You Belong Here

Sample Campaigns

- Prudential's Self-ID video

- Raytheon Technologies #iCount Self-ID Campaign Showcases the Importance of All Employees

- Walmart's Self-Identification Campaign: Driven by Culture, Not Compliance

Self-ID Campaigns for Non-Government Organizations

- Per the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), non-government contracting employers may ask employees to self-identify as individuals with disabilities if they are voluntarily using the information to benefit individuals with disabilities (vs. government contractors/sub-contractors who are required to ask individuals with disabilities to self-ID). The employer must also be taking actions that benefit individuals with disabilities and the invitation to self-identify must be necessary in order to take those actions. For additional EEOC requirements for non-government contractors who wish to self-ID, refer to the EEOC enforcement guidance and work with your legal counsel.

- Defining "Disability" for non-government contractors:

  - Whether you decide to use ADA, social security, or another definition, be sure you are clear so employees can understand what "disabled" means related to self-ID.

Global Campaigns

- Each region/country may need to support the self-id campaign differently based on local rules, customs, terminology, etc. It's important to look at the local culture when talking about disability and how receptive employees will be to identifying based on stigma/acceptance in their country/region.

- Legal counsel should be consulted before proceeding with self-ID globally. There are country-specific regulations that need to be considered (i.e., in some countries, it is ok to ask employees to self-id, but you may not be able to store the data due to privacy laws, in other countries you can't even ask the question or it needs to be phrased a certain way.)

Metrics

It is unlikely E/BRG leaders will get access to the raw data (especially if your company is a government contractor/sub-contractor) but that doesn't mean you shouldn't provide suggestions on how the company and the ERG could benefit from analysis of the consolidated data.

- What Key Performance Indicators are used to know if you are doing a good job?

- Since it may be difficult to define what an "acceptable" participation rate or % of population would be, consider using improvement of these numbers over time as a key metric.

- Government contractors have a goal of 7% and the CDC reports that 1 in 4 persons has a disability; for non-government contractors, an ERG can suggest a self-ID rate to aspire to reach…perhaps the 7% to start and work up to 25% representation. Keep in mind that participation is voluntary so culture will play a large part in who participates.

- While many companies are striving to reach around 7% representation in each of their job groups, it comes back to the self-ID and how participating can positively impact inclusion efforts. ERGs can help communicate that to the organization.

- Companies measure the total percent of the population against baseline population, but they can also measure the subset of who went into the tool to make any selection (participation).

- Benchmark organizations who are deep into this journey to see what their numbers look like and how you compare. The Disability Equality Index (DEI) reports and best practices are updated each year to reflect new benchmark information. Reference the DEI webpage.

- Suggest different ways HR/DE&I/ERGs may use the data.

  - Information is a good way to inform the company that they need to hire more individuals with disabilities to ensure the employee population representation looks like the local population and/or the population from which you recruit.

  - Consider looking at data to see if you are only hiring individuals with disabilities into certain departments, jobs or levels within the organization.

  - Tie self ID data to other data sources to evaluate where employees could be better supported (i.e., cross reference self-ID and insurance usage or EAP usage to indicate benefits that could be of value to the employee population).

  - Map where those that disclose sit within the organization's hierarchy. This will help the company understand if there are areas of the company that might feel less comfortable or where inclusive practices may not be practiced.

- Perform equity analysis to assess state of disability inclusion in hiring, promotions, retention/turnover, participating in leadership development programs, etc. and to influence culture and programs to support the population.

- Suggest comparison of numbers of self-id in work-climate surveys vs during self-id campaign to see if there is a gap in those who identify in each situation.

- Measure engagement survey response differences from various employee populations.

- ERGs can use the data to measure the impact they have on things like belonging and retention.

- ERG can suggest the development of an internal transparency report to share disability inclusion information. Reports could include:

  - Disability inclusion vision,

  - Statement from CEO or ERG Executive Sponsor,

  - Personal employee stories on how company is supporting their growth,

- Representation goals,

- Current metrics (hires, % who used LOA to care for family member, self-ID participation, % of population who identifies as having a disability, intersectionality data),

- Information related to progress made on inclusion goals (numbers and actions), and future actions to be taken to help improve representation. Such reports could tie into actions different parts of the organization can take to improve inclusion. Here is a sample of what one partner company includes in their report:

- **Getting Here:** Recruiting, onboarding, and branding.

  - Possible Actions:

    - Tracking of new hires year over year from underrepresented groups.

- Develop intern and new hire mentorship programs to benefit underrepresented groups.

- **Succeeding Here:** Engaging and fostering an environment of DEI, providing access to development and advancement opportunities, creating consistency of experience for all.

  - Possible Actions:

    - Launch and enhance Self-ID platform.

    - Offer more choice and well-being in benefits support.

    - Implement company-wide recognized days for disability pride celebrations such as Global Accessibility Awareness Day or International Day of People with Disabilities.

    - DEI training included Ethics and Integrity training.

    - Include DEI goals in formal performance development process.

- **Leading Here:** creating clear paths for professional promotion, cultivating talent to rise to senior leadership, serving our communities through stewardship and board service.

  - Possible Actions:

    - Tracking of promotions from underrepresented groups.

    - Tracking of professionals actively involved in Business Resource Groups representing underrepresented groups.

    - Collaboration with company's Foundation and Community Impact groups.

    - Company independent and employee matching donation to community impact groups of underrepresented groups.

- Many companies are now reporting diversity data externally (including disability self-id information) as part of their annual reports, CSR reports, and/or on their websites:

- [Accenture's Workforce Demographics in the US - 2021](#)
- [Microsoft](#)
- [Northrup Grumman](#)

Sample Frequently Asked Questions

These are meant to be a starting point for questions. Questions and answers should be developed to fit your company culture, how your data will be used, and should be reviewed with legal counsel.

Q: What am I being asked to do and why?

A: We are asking all U.S. team members to participate in a voluntary self-identification process to share information pertaining to their race/ethnicity, veteran status, disability status, gender identity and sexual orientation. This will help us better understand the composition of our workforce and provide more impactful programming, initiatives, and resources to optimize the team member experience.

Q: How is the company going to use the information I share?

A: We continue to leverage the benefits of talent analytics, and the company may share self-identification results in to inform Diversity, Equity & Inclusion objectives, understand the composition of our organization, and to optimize the team member experience. Additionally, as a federal contractor, we are required to submit reports containing general information about our workforce makeup. These reports do not include personally identifiable information. For more details, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

Q: Will my race/ethnicity, veteran status, disability status, gender identity and/or sexual identity self-identification information be considered in employment decisions or reported to my insurance provider?

A: Your self-identification information will remain confidential and may be used in aggregate form. Your manager will not have access to this information, and it will not have any adverse implications or be considered in any adverse manner. It will not be provided to your insurance provider.

Q: What should I do if I have questions about how my self-identification information is being used, collected, or stored?

A: Please discuss with your manager, or contact [NAME].

Q: What happens if I do not self-identify my race/ethnicity, veteran status, disability status, gender identity and/or sexual orientation?

A: Participating in the self-identification process is voluntary. You always have the option to opt-out of disclosing information related to your race/ethnicity, veteran status, disability status, gender identity or sexual orientation. For accurate reporting, we would prefer that you select "I don't wish to disclose" instead of not participating in the self-identification process at all.

Q: How do I change my previously entered self-identification information?

A: To change your race/ethnicity information, please contact: XX. To change all other self-identification information, simply log back in and complete the 'Background Information' section again.

Additional FAQs to consider:

- What do you hope to accomplish by asking for this information?

- What data can/cannot be used and for what purposes (govt vs. non-govt contractors)

- What is considered to be a "disability"? How do I know if I have a "disability"?

- What happens when coming forward and identifying? – will improve the company's business - company can utilize your skills and experiences for our products, Manager will not be notified, this is not an accommodation request

- Where will the information be stored? How will data be used? Who will have access to the information? Will my manager see the information? For global campaign be sure there is Q&A about consent and how data will be used.

- Do I have to participate? Do I need to self-identify again if I have already done so before?

- What's in it for me—why should I voluntarily self-ID as having a disability?

- My disability doesn't affect my work, do I need to disclose it?

- What is the process for requesting a workplace accommodation if I have a disability?

Sample Communications

These samples are being provided as a way for E/BRG leaders to suggest different types of communications and wording to those running the self-id campaigns.

- Overall Key Message Example

  [Company name] has a welcoming workplace where we recognize everyone as an individual.

  Today, we ask our team members to provide several pieces of information, including their level of engagement, performance measures as well as personal information such as race/ethnicity, veteran's status, and any known disabilities.

  This personal information is used to help us determine Business Resource Groups, benefits and programs that will improve the team member experience.

  We handle this data very carefully and will measure the information against our engagement and benefits data to ensure we are meeting the needs of all team members who identify as disabled.

  Providing the information is optional. Your manager will not have access to this data. Only select individuals in HR and leadership have access to the background information in Employee Self Service.

- Leader Brief Example

  Header: Update Your Background Information in Employee Self Service

  Sub-Header: Encourage your teams to complete new fields in SAP next week

  On Monday we will be sharing details on three new fields that have been added to the Background Information section in Employee Self Service. These three questions will center around disability identity, gender identity, transgender identity, and LGBTQ identity.

  All U.S. team members, regardless of background, are encouraged to update their background information including answers to these optional questions to help the

company better understand our workforce population so we can create more impactful programming, initiatives, and provide resources and support.

Please encourage your teams to complete these (and our other) self-ID questions by visiting Employee Self Service and clicking on "Background Information".

Leaders can fill out the self-ID section today by visiting Employee Self Service portal!

- Employee Communication Example

  TO: Team Members

  FROM: Sr. Executive

  DATE:

  SUBJECT: Update Your Background Information in Employee Self Service

  NEED TO KNOW:

  - U.S. team members are encouraged to update their Background Information in Employee Self Service, with additional fields: disability identity, sexual orientation, gender, and transgender identity.

  - Only select individuals in HR and leadership have access to this background information.

  - Providing this information will help the company better understand each individual and offer relevant Business Resource Groups, benefits and programs.

  ACTION NEEDED:

  - Visit Employee Self Service and click on "Background Information" to complete the optional form.

  - Review the email memo below

We ask our team members to provide several pieces of information, including their level of engagement, performance measures as well as personal information, such as race/ethnicity, veteran status and any known disabilities. You may have provided this information to us when you joined the company or later in your career. We ask for this information because we want to maintain a welcoming workplace where we understand and recognize each individual. The personal information we request helps us determine Business Resource Groups, benefits and programs that will improve the team member experience.

We are requesting all U.S. team members to update their background information to ensure our employee information remains up to date. Additional pieces of information we are now offering team members to update disability identity, sexual orientation and gender identity. To better understand each individual who works at [company name], we have added these fields in our Background Information records in Employee Self Service.

We understand this information is very personal. Like all background information, providing disability identity, sexual orientation and gender identity is optional. We take our team members' privacy seriously and are managing this data very carefully. We will measure the information against our engagement and benefits data to ensure we are meeting the needs of all team members. Your manager will not have access to this data. Only select individuals in HR and leadership have access to the background information in Employee Self Service.

Team members can update their background information at any time, but we encourage you to do so by [date]. To fill out this voluntary form please:

Log in to the Employee Self Service portal (link)...

Thank you for your participation and support in helping us further our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. If you have any questions or concerns on the self-ID form or process, please email [email address].

- E/BRG Members Email Example

    BRG Members –

    On Monday, you will receive an email from [Sr. Executive name]. In the email, s/he will announce the addition of new questions that have been added to the company's self-ID form in Employee Self Service.

    Historically the self-ID form has included questions on race/ethnicity, and veteran status. The new questions that have been added center around disability, gender, transgender, and LGBTQ identity.

    Our ask today is that you lead by example as a BRG member and complete this voluntary and confidential self-ID form, including the additional new questions, to support the company's efforts in furthering our diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programming and providing resources and support to our team members.

    [INSERT BRG LEADER/MEMBER TESTIMONIALS]

    To fill out this voluntary form please:

    1. Log-in to the Employee Self Service…

    In addition, if you'd like to further your support for this initiative, we encourage you to share the news of the new fields in the self-ID form and their importance, with at least two people in your team member network. Championing this cause will help to ensure we're reaching as many people as possible!

    Thank you for your continued support in our BRG and DEI efforts. If you have any questions or concerns on the self-ID form or process, please email XX.

Additional Resources

Here are some additional resources that may be helpful to E/BRG leaders and/or those who are leading the self-ID efforts.

- [Best Practices for Self-Identification](#)

- [AskEARN: Engaging Employees to Measure Success: Innovative Approaches to Encouraging Self-Identification of Disability](#)

- [AskEARN: Communicating the Benefits of Self-Identification: Five Steps to Success](#)

- [AskEARN: Encouraging Self-Identification](#) – Learn more about the role of employers in supporting self-identification

- [Job Accommodation Network: Disability Disclosure and Employment](#)

- [Department of Labor: 503 Regulations](#), [Section 503 FAQs](#), [Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability Form](#) – Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is applicable to Government Contractors/Sub-Contractors, but may have information that could be helpful to non-government contractors as well.

Operational Stage

- Serve as escalation point and advocate for employees with disabilities (possibly integrated if ERG is escalation point instead of a sounding board) – influence development of ombudsperson role for individuals with disabilities or process to escalate concerns.

Integrated Stage

- Develop disability-related support groups.

- Create mentorship programs for employees with disabilities to improve retention, performance evaluations, and promotions
  - You can focus on measuring the outcomes/impacts of programs via personal /professional development, or more towards how the business would benefit
  - Metric – Self-disclosed individuals assigned to a mentor (#)

- Encourage HR to assess the state of employees with disabilities within your organization regarding hiring, retention, promotion, and performance valuation
    - Metric – Total job roles hired into (#); number if hires who self-identify as having a disability
    - Metric – Unique job roles hired into (#)
- Influence equity analysis and improvement programs in HR to improve the status of employees with disabilities
- Evaluate sourcving and hiring of Individuals with Disabilities
    - Where is the pipeline of suitable employees with disabilities for your industry?
    - If it is lower than expected, where in the hiring activity pipeline are the gaps?
    - Metric – utilization of the pipeline
    - Metric – hiring rate of people with disabilities
    - Track turnover of employees with disabilities and recommend program development to address gaps.
    - Metric – Termination/retention rates (voluntary/involuntary) compared to other under-represented groups; compared to the rest of the organization
    - Metric – Reason for leaving of those with disabilities vs. those without
    - Metric – Track progress, year over year
- Evaluate promotion/performance programs
    - Metric – promotion rate and performance ratings compared to other under-represented groups; compared to the rest of the organization

- Metric – Self-disclosed individuals in stretch assignments (#)

- Metric – Self-disclosed individuals in shadowing opportunities (#)

Dynamic Stage

- Influence on skills assessments rather than behavioral or psychometric to determine if hiring assessments are used.

- Have company include ERG accomplishments and skills development into performance evaluations.

- Evaluate performance through objective rather than subjective measures.

- Promote customizing career progression plans to tailor to the individual instead of one-size fits all approach.

- Drive the company to develop a self-ID campaign for underrepresented groups and ensure that disability is included.

- Influence HR department to create formal program with Talent Acquisition team focused specifically on disability.

- Influence the procurement/hiring department for contractors, to ensure accessibility compliance for contractors and increased hiring of contractors with disabilities.

- Provide input into Emergency Response/Evacuation Procedures.

- Collect feedback from individuals with disabilities (internal/external) to provide feedback to company (inclusion efforts, accommodations, opportunities).

Workforce: Culture/Inclusion

Foundational Stage

- Build sense of community

- Disability marketing campaign/disseminating information to inform/educate and celebrate disability inclusion (intranet, newsletters, internal blog posts)

  - Metric – # campaigns, communications

- Create website or resource library, web links, information on disability

  - Metric – #website visits

- ERG members assist with onboarding new hires with disabilities

  - Communications about accommodations and helpful benefits; engaging managers and new team.

- Encourage self-advocacy.

- Encourage inclusion of benefits for caregivers and care receivers

- Organize disability awareness events to inform/education on disability and celebrate inclusion.

  - Metric -# events hosted in a year

  - Metric – # ERG members attending events/#non-ERG employees attending events

- Connect with other diverse ERGs and share information about the intersectionality of disability and other diverse groups

- Invite disability inclusion allies to join ERG.

Disability Inclusion E/BRG Allies: Programs and Engagement

People talk about allies, but you don't always hear about what that means and how resource groups engage allies. This resource has been developed provide resources to disability E/BRGs as they look to support employees with disabilities by engaging allies.

What is an Ally

Most people think of ally as a noun, which the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines as "a person or group that is associated with another or others for some common cause or purpose."

However, the verb form of ally needs to be the focus for E/BRG leaders. As a verb, ally means "to unite or form a connection or relation between." True allyship is action, not a title.

By recruiting and engaging allies at every level of the organization in supporting and advocating for colleagues with disabilities, you can create a culture of true inclusion.

- Here are some sample definitions relating to allies:

  - Ally: Anyone who commits to creating a culture of inclusion and pursuing the advancement of others through positive efforts that benefit all people is an ally.

  - Allyship: Allyship is a lifelong process of building relationships with marginalized groups and individuals via trust, consistency, and accountability. It's not self-determined, but rather based on efforts recognized by those for whom you're allying.

  - Actionable Allyship: Becoming an active ally means putting your words and intentions into practice. Allies do this by lifting others, sharing opportunities, recognizing inequalities, listening openly, and following through with self-reflection, growth, and change.

- What is the purpose of an ally and what value do they bring?

  - Allyship is linked to business outcomes that include innovation, productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction. It helps alleviate feelings of burnout and fatigue and reduces employee turnover from those who may opt to leave because they feel unwelcome or uncomfortable.

- To create fully diverse, equitable, and inclusive workspaces, we should not leave the work of advocating for inclusion to the underrepresented or marginalized groups. Rather, we should act as allies to people from marginalized groups and use our positions of privilege to support them and help destroy any external barriers that limit the ability of these people to contribute their skills and talents or to access resources and opportunities. (Forbes: Why Allyship is Good for Business, 2021)

- Be a sounding board for programs and initiatives to educate and influence the non-disabled community (i.e., universal/inclusive design, accommodations, self-ID).

- Increase awareness about the disability community and the issues that impact them. Provide insights to the disability community about the lives of persons without disabilities.

- Serve as a bridge between the disabled and non-disabled communities to strengthen an inclusive culture.

- Build a place of psychological safety for those with disabilities.

- Be "speak-up champions" and stand up against wrongdoing.

- Roles that allies may fill to support disability-focused E/BRGs:

  - Sponsors.

  - Partners from other E/BRGs (i.e., the concept of intersectionality-identifying with more than one marginalized community).

  - Individual contributors who are empathetic to the work you're doing.

  - Business partners who are willing to help by using their skills (i.e., IT, Talent Acquisition).

- To identify potential ally populations, identify who may have similar needs and think about what they want from your E/BRG to make their efforts meaningful in their lives. Take a targeted approach to programs that meet each of their needs and gives meaning to them as an ally (i.e., helps them meet their personal goals, helps their part of the business, improves workforce retention and the reputation of the business).

- These may include:

    - Caretakers.

    - Families and friends of someone with a disability but are not necessarily caretakers.

    - Empathetic supporters – many empathetic supporters eventually report they have a disability.

    - Peers and executives – provide executives with data that demonstrates the business case for engaging allies.

Training Allies

Create a safe space and include allies in discussions on what they would like to learn about disabilities. Also keep in in mind that they don't know what they don't know so you should also think about different topics that would help colleagues become better allies such as:

- Disability terminology and how to talk about disabilities, and etiquette (how to engage with individuals with disabilities).

- Accessibility and various disabilities (ambulatory, hearing, speech, vision, intellectual, behavioral, mental health, etc.).

- Barriers to inclusion for the disability community (physical, policy, social, transportation, digital, attitudes, etc.)

- How to be an ally and show support, respect, and advocate. This might include how to use inclusive language or how to break stigmas around mental health or other disabilities.

- Disability Fundamentals Training for Managers: https://disabilityin.org/resource/disability-fundamentals-training-for-managers/

- Disability:IN webinars and recordings: https://disabilityin.org/resources2/corporate-partners-portal/ (This is a password protected resource. Contact your company's point of contact with Disability:IN to obtain the password.)

Recognizing Allies

- Provide meaningful recognition, acknowledging the contributions of allies in visible and impactful ways.

- Create a champion award program that recognizes/rewards allies for their contributions to disability inclusion; nominate someone as the E/BRGs biggest ally.

Tips on How to Be a Disability-Inclusion Ally

- Recognize that it's your role to create a space for others rather than focus on your own individual efforts. Amplify the voices of those who are marginalized before your own.

- Remember a colleague's disability is one aspect of their identity. Get to know individuals with disabilities as people first.

- Join an E/BRG to learn, network, and get involved.

- Overcome the fear of saying the wrong thing – even the most experienced advocate does not know everything.

- Become informed and do your best to regularly utilize disability etiquette and respectful language choices and encourage others to do the same. Learn about disability, etiquette, and language so you are comfortable talking about it.

  - Attend trainings and webinars, read books and articles, watch movies, listen to podcasts.

  - Learn how to ask about someone's disability; ask if they are comfortable sharing, then listen if they want to share.

  - Understand the medical model, social model, and hybrid model of disability. (National Institutes of Health – Rethinking Disability: The Social Model of Disability and Chronic Disease)

  - Be aware of the difference between having a disability and the experience of being disabled; keep in mind each individual experiences their disability differently.

- Be a champion for those with apparent or non-apparent disabilities.

  - Make sure captions are turned on as a default for your meetings. Ask captions to be turned on during on-line meetings when they are not the default.

  - Ensure meetings and documents are accessible.

  - Be present – show up for events supporting the community.

  - Automatically provide closed captioning or CART services for all large company meetings and have in place standard mechanism for making this accommodation request when any type of meeting is announced.

  - Ask that all company meeting invitations and interviews include instructions on how to request an accommodation to be able to fully participate in the meeting/interview, if needed. (Consider including examples such as wheelchair access, sign language interpreter, CART services, dietary restrictions, etc.)

  - When a microphone is available, encourage usage for people who are hard of hearing.

  - Ensure managers include workplace accommodations information when providing employee resources/support at the end of all performance reviews, new hire on-boarding, etc. (when providing other resources such as tuition reimbursement, Employee Assistance Program, and learning and development internal resources).

  - Be aware of and able to readily direct people to company's accommodations processes (for both ongoing accommodations and any needed for a specific meeting or event).

  - Be an empathetic listener when individuals with disabilities choose to confide in you as an ally and maintain any requested confidences.

- Offer assistance/support when observing a person with a disability is having difficulty reaching or carrying something, opening a door, finding where they need to go, or otherwise fully participating safely and comfortably in the work environment. (Note, if offer of assistance declined, accept this as a positive exchange).

- Remind colleagues that 75% of disabilities are non-apparent and we should not assume that there are not people with disabilities in the work group or on the team.

- Interrupt bias when you come across it. It may be in the form of negative or prejudicial comments or jokes about people with disabilities.

- Provide equity for people with disabilities in all areas of employment including recruitment, hiring, promotions, and compensation.

Tips on How to be a Disability-Inclusion Ally

- Levels of ally engagement.

Passive ➡ Learning ➡ Leading ➡ Advocating
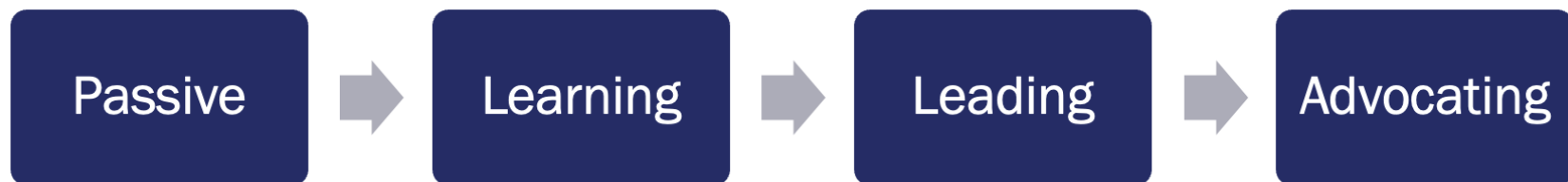
  - Passive: Join E/BRG with minimal involvement.

  - Learning: Attend events, trainings, workshops.

  - Leading: Serve in a leadership capacity for E/BRG; mentor employees with disabilities.

  - Advocating: Influence decisions so individuals with disabilities are included (i.e., product development, web design, hiring, promotions, accessibility, marketing).

- E/BRG leaders should take an active approach to invite colleagues to join as an ally.

  - Include colleagues at all levels within the organization.

  - Identify key stakeholders to invite to the table by tying your work to shared business goals: IT, Talent Acquisition, Product Development, User Experience, product accessibility team. Demonstrate how disability inclusion can positively impact their part of the business.

- Assume your allies don't yet have all the tools they need, and they are engaging to learn more and to be supportive.

    - Host education opportunities on how to show support for the disability community and provide a safe place to ask questions.

    - Disability isn't a bad word; help allies feel more comfortable talking about it.

- Create a culture of inclusion.

    - The E/BRG can let people know this is a comfortable place to participate.

    - Create a space of psychological safety so allies can be open.

    - Encourage members with disabilities to be approachable and create a space where allies can be real and ask questions. Host "Awkward Question" sessions.

    - Create a separate safe space or sub-group where allies can connect with each other.

- Listen to allies.

    - Recognize that inclusion works both ways and have two-way conversations where you ask for input from your allies.

    - Ask allies for their lived experience as someone without a disability and what types of programming would be helpful for them.

    - Provide recognition and programs that are as valuable to allies as they are to those with disabilities, so everyone benefits from their participation.

- Allies may already be supporting other diverse E/BRGs. Have information available regarding intersectionality to show how their allyship with another E/BRG intersects with disability. (Refer to intersectionality information in this toolkit for resources.)

    - Collaborate during awareness months/dates to bring more people to the table.

- Focus on areas of common interest (i.e., mental health, professional development, neurodiversity).

- Partner with other E/BRGs to share best practices on engaging allies.

- Engage allies in support of accessibility (documents, presentations, virtual meetings, evets, websites, marketing, internal/customer systems, products, etc.).

- Use company culture and existing tools that serve other purposes to engage allies. (i.e., lunch-n-learns, host "Ask me anything" Q&A sessions, provide regular time slots when allies can talk and learn more)

- Give your allies a seat at the table.

  - Invite allies to Co-chair the E/BRG or serve in some capacity on your E/BRG leadership team or steering committees.

  - Have allies initiate and lead programs that will resonate with the ally community.

  - Encourage allies to speak up and advocate for disability inclusion in their own departments and across the organization.

- Provide resources and guidance geared toward allies.

  - Websites and articles:

    - Disability:IN Resource Library: https://disabilityin.org/resources/

    - Disability:IN Blog: https://disabilityin.org/news-events/blog/

    - Disability Etiquette - A Starting Guide: https://disabilityin.org/resource/disability-etiquette/

    - Country Directory: https://disabilityin.org/resource/global-directory/

    - US Department of Labor: https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability

- World Health Organization: https://www.who.int/health-topics/disability#tab=tab_1

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability-resources.html

- Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN): https://askearn.org/

- Job Accommodation Network (JAN): https://askjan.org/

- Create opportunities for allies to connect and build relationships.

  - Consider hosting events for members to have candid conversations with each other.

- Encourage allies to get involved in meaningful work such as:

  - Identify accessibility errors can you find on the company internal/external websites.

  - Change settings to mimic color blindness and take a look at what is missed on internal/external websites, presentations, etc.

  - Turn off sound and only use captions for a day—or a meeting—to see what that is like and discover other ways to communicate.

  - Participate in Mental Health America training events to become a mental health first aider: https://mhanational.org/workplace-training-and-resources.

  - Gain credentials and expertise such as: Certified Professional in Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC): https://www.accessibilityassociation.org/s/certified-professional

Metrics

Gather metrics to demonstrate ally program successes and pre-package the information to share with others. Some examples include:

- Poll E/BRG members asking if they identify as a person with a disability or ally at their level of comfort. Include a definition of ally and person with disability. Do this regularly as sympathetic supporters may later identify as a person with a disability.

- Check for horizontal vs vertical membership – Does membership represent the company demographics, and do you have representation across all levels? It shouldn't just be a flat bar of people at the same level within your organization.

- Compare your demographics to other internal E/BRGs – How do your numbers stack up against your counterparts across the organization? Are other E/BRGs able to engage people at all levels and if so, how did they do that within the organization?

- Measure if allies are actively engaging (events, community engagement, communication channels, intern mentor or other mentor programs, etc.).

Additional Resources

- Betterallies.com – Everyday actions to create inclusive, engaging workplaces

- 3 Ways to Better Employee Resource Groups – Forbes magazine article

- 5 Ways ERGs Can be Inclusive: Defining the Ally's Role – San Francisco Fed article

- 7 Examples of What Being an Ally at Work Really Looks Like – The Muse article

- Stronger Together: How to Build Allies in the Workplace – Training Industry article-includes stages of allyship

- Why Allyship is Good for Business - Forbes article

- 5 Tips for Being a Good Ally: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/all-things-lgbtq/201711/5-tips-being-good-ally

- Demystifying Disability: What to Know, What to Say, and How to Be an Ally – Book written by Emily Ladau

Intersectionality

Intersectionality: Disability & Aging

According to the Job Accommodation Network, many individuals will continue to work at full production with no accommodations. Around 40 million Americans are over age 65, and that number is expected to continue to increase as baby boomers age. With the aging of the baby-boom generation, the average age for workers will increase, and the likelihood that more employees will be managing a disability rises. Many individuals will continue to work at full production with no accommodations. However, aging may contribute to limitations that can easily and cheaply be accommodated. Age-related limitations can involve a wide range of conditions, including depression and anxiety, and other cognitive, sensory, and physical limitations. Learn more about disabiity and aging: https://askjan.org/disabilities/Aging.cfm

Resource Centers:

- General Resources provided by USAging.com

- California Resources

- Connecticut Resources

- Oregon Resources

- Pennsylvania Resources

- Texas Resources

Intersectionality: Disability & American Indian & Alaskan Native

- Native Americans, Disability and Employment – Library of Congress Panel: Information on the Tribal Outreach Program of the National Council on Disability and insights from the experiences of Native Americans specialists in employment and disability issues.

- Understanding Disabilities in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities – Toolkit Guide

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that Native people overall are 50.3% more likely to have a disability, when compared to the national average (CDC, 2008).

Intersectionality: Disability & Asian/Pacific Islander

Non-Profit Organizations:

- Asian Americans with Disabilities Initiative (AADI - www.aadinitiative.org) was founded in July 2021 and is rooted in the spirit of intersectionality. It was founded by a young Korean American student at Princeton, who went through years of testing before discovering that she has Chron's disease. As it turns out, there was no widely accepted translation for Crohn's disease, and it is widely thought to be a disease affecting Caucasians. This stirred her interest in exploring the intersection between her disability and her Asian-American identity.

- Asians and Pacific Islanders with Disabilities of California (APIDC - www.apidisabilities.org) was created in 1999 as an informal coalition to develop the next generation of leaders – youth with disabilities. However, as it has evolved through outreach and conferences, APDIC has undertaken original research in the absence of data specifically aimed at APIs with disabilities.

In 2016, the Disability Visibility Project highlighted Asian Pacific Americans with Disabilities.

Articles, essays, etc.:

- Here are some blogs, insights and articles written by young Asian Americans with disabilities.

- A great article that appeared in Glamour Magazine in 2021 about the intersectionality of being an Asian woman with a disability

- Another article from 2021, this article focuses on why Asian American kids are under-diagnosed when it comes to learning disabilities.

- A Huffington Post article featuring Alice Wong, best known for launching the Disability Visibility Project

- Another Huffington Post article on what's like being disabled and Asian in America, also features Tiffany Yu who launched Diversability

- CUNY Journal of teaching Disability Studies on "Cultural interpretations among Asian views of disability" by Jennifer Feng

- Huffpost on Asian Voices article on "What It's like being disabled and Asian in American" by Wendy Lu

- Article on "The Ruse of Analogy: Blackness in Asian American and Disability Studies"

- Article: Disabled Asian Americans Deal with Racism and Ableism

- Approximately one out of ten Asians have a disability: https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/materials/infographic-disabilities-ethnicity-race.html

- Video: Elevating Intersectionality: Disability and the Asian Experience in Media - YouTube

Intersectionality: Disability & Black/African American

Fourteen percent (14%) of working-age African Americans have a disability compared with 11 percent of Non-Hispanic Whites and eight percent of Latinos. In fact, African Americans are more likely than Non-Hispanic Whites to have a disability in every age group. National Disability Institute - FINANCIAL INEQUALITY: Disability, Race and Poverty in America

Exploring the Intersection of Black History and Disability Inclusion – U.S. Dept. of Labor Blog – Black Americans in the civil rights movement have had a significant influence on America's disability rights movement.

According to the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, Black adults in the US are more likely than white adults to report persistent symptoms of emotional distress. Despite the needs, only 1 in 3 Black adults who need mental health care receive it. National Alliance on Mental Illness

The death rate for Blacks/African Americans is generally higher than whites for heart diseases, stroke, cancer, asthma, influenza and pneumonia, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and homicide. US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health

Video/Audio-Black/African American & Disability: How I've Overcome my Fear of Stuttering – LeRon Barton – Over 70 Million people in the world stutter (1% of the population)

TikToker Nakia Smith (Charmay) talks about the history of BASL and how it's unique from ASL. [How To Sign In BASL (Black American Sign Language) | Strong Black Lead - YouTube](#)

Intersectional Insights Podcast: Olivia and Raven are black blind women spreading awareness, and sharing their perspectives on disability and black womanhood. Episodes are about 3-5 minutes long. [Intersectional Insights | Podcast on Spotify](#)

[Intersectionality of Race and Disability 2022](#) – Disabillity:IN Webinar – Corporate partners share practices around employment support, supplier diversity efforts, ERG/BRG collaboration and more.

[Intersectionality of Race and Disability 2021](#) – Disability:IN Webinar – Corporate partners share who they practice disability inclusion through a framework of intersectionality and best practices on multicultural recruitment and retention.

Resources:

- [Black, Disabled and Proud website](#) for college students

- [National Black Disability Coalition](#)

- [National Black Deaf Advocates](#)

- Information about [Black men, disability, and police violence](#) (this article has numerous links in it to other resources)

Intersectionality: Disability & Latino/Latina

According to the final report of the [2014-19 Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Plan of Action on Disabilities and Rehabilitation](#), there are a total of 52 Pan-American Countries & Territories and of those countries:

- 25 (48%) have specific legislation on disability,

- 17 (33%) are implementing national disability and rehabilitation plans,

- 16 (31%) have a Community Based Rehabilitation Strategy,

- 15 (29%) use the International Classification of Functioning (ICF) in their disability certification systems,

- 8 (15%) do not include disability in their disaster and emergency risk management plans.

Additionally, PAHO data indicates that:

- Almost 12% of the Latin American and Caribbean population is thought to live with at least one disability, representing around 66 million people.

- 17 Countries have signed the Inter-American Convention On The Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Persons With Disabilities.

- People with disabilities are 2-4 times more likely to die in disasters and emergencies than those without disabilities.

- Many health facilities and services are inaccessible for people with disabilities. Barriers that are faced by people with disabilities include inaccessible health spaces, communications barriers, lack of training of professionals, financial barriers.

According to the 2018 US Disability Status Report, the prevalence of disability among non-institutionalized people by Hispanic/Latino origin and age group in the United States was:

- All ages: 8.9% (vs 13.5% for non-Hispanic)

- Ages 4 and under: 0.9% (vs 0.7 for non-Hispanic)

- Ages 1-15: 5.4% (vs 5.4% for non-Hispanic)

- Ages 16-20: 5.6 (vs 6.5 for non-Hispanic)

- Ages 21-64: 8.3 (vs 10.9 for non-Hispanic)

- Ages 65-74: 57.3 (vs 24.1 for non-Hispanic)

- Ages 65+: 52.5 (vs 47.1 for non-Hispanic)

Video/Audio: Latino/Latina and Disability

- [LatinX Disability Community & Access to Education](#) – Podcast – World Institute on Disability: Conversation with Conchita Hernandez, founder and chair of Mentoring, Engaging and Teaching All Students, a nonprofit that trains educators in Latin America who work with blind and low vision students.

- [Overcoming Ablesim:](#) What you don't know as an Able-Bodied Person – TedX – Katy Rico talks about the importance of recognizing intersectionalities by sharing her experiences at UC Irvine.

- [What It's Like to Be LatinX and Disabled – Video](#) – Andrea Lausell shares her story of how disability affects someone who is Latinx and responds to common questions she is asked or comments that are made about her disability in a light-hearted way.

- [Ensuring Authentic Representation of Hispanic and Latinx Disabled People in the Entertainment Industry Video](#) – respectability.org

Intersectionality: Disability & LGBTQ+

- It is estimated that 3-5 million LGBT people have disabilities. [This is an infographic on the intersection of LGBT and disability](#).

- LGBTQ individuals are more than twice as likely as heterosexual men and women to have a mental health disorder in their lifetime. LGBTQ individuals are 2.5 times more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and substance misuse compared with heterosexual individuals. Approximately 31% of LGBTQ older adults report depressive symptoms; 39% report serious thoughts of taking their own lives. [American Mental Health Association - Mental Health Disparities: LGBTQ](#)

  - List of [Resources on Disability and LGBTQ](#) followed by a short description that was compiled by [Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center](#)

  - [The Intersection of LGBTQ History and Disability](#) – Philadelphia Gay News: Article includes information about famous people who identify as both LGBTQ and disabled, including the late Morty Manford, LGBTQ civil rights activist who co-founded Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) with his mother and had psychiatric disabilities and AIDS.

- The importance of Intersectional Accessibility in Activism – Hayden Kristal – Tedx Talk - Disability & LGBTQ

- Resources: Respectability: LGBQ+ People with Disabilities

Intersectionality: Disability & Veteran

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: https://www.va.gov/resources/

- Mental Health Resources

  - U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Mental Health (Wounded Warrior Project): https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov

  - DAV: https://www.dav.org/veterans/resources/

  - National Library Service: https://www.loc.gov/nls/resources/general-resources-on-disabilities/resources-for-disabled-veterans/

  - U.S. National Library of Medicine/National Institutes of Health: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5279827/

- State Specific Resources

  - California:

    - CalVet: Veterans Resource Book

  - New York:

    - Disabilities Support

    - Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) - free membership connects veterans with spinal cord injuries or related diseases to services including assistance with your earned VA benefits, help with employment and higher education, sports and recreation opportunities, and access to PVA's research and advocacy efforts.

- The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities has created a [resource guide](#) to support during the COVID-19 crisis. If you have questions or concerns regarding disability services, please contact 212-788-2830 or 646-396-5830.

- Talent Case Study: [LeAndre Yarrell: Mentoring Leads to Opportunities for Advancement for a Combat Injured Veteran](#)

- Video/Audio:

  - [The Dichotomy of a Service-Disabled Veteran: from Invincible Warrior to Ordinary Citizen – Disability:IN Webinar](#) – The miliary has its own culture, language and style.

  - Here what employers are doing to create a veteran-informed culture in their workplaces. [Webinar Slide Deck.](#)

  - [Veterans with Disabilities:](#) Retaining them Once Hired – Disability:IN Webinar – Companies share their strategies for onboarding and ongoing practices and policies in support of veterans. [Webinar Slide Deck.](#)

Co-host Events with Other Diverse ERGs to Raise Awareness of Intersectionality

- January:

  - **All Month** – Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Month

  - **January 1** – Emancipation Proclamation Anniversary (Black/African American)

  - **January 4** – Myanmar Independence Day (Asian/Pacific Islander)

  - **2nd Monday** – Coming of Age Day (Asian/Pacific Islander - Japan)

  - **January 26** – Republic Day (Asian/Pacific Islander - India)

  - **Varies: January/February** – Lunar New Year (Asian/Pacific Islander – China and other Asian Countries)

- February

  - **February 1** – National Freedom Day (Black/African American)

  - **February 4** – Rosa Parks Day (Black/African American)

  - **February 14** – One Billion Rising (Women), Black Love Day (Black/African American), Pink Triangle Day (LGBTQ2+)

  - **Week after February 14** – Aromantic Spectrum Awareness Week (LGBTQ2+)

  - **February 20** – World Day of Social Justice

- March

  - **All Month** – Women's History Month (Women) & Ethnic Equality Month

  - **March 8** – International Women's Day (Women)

  - **March 21** – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (Black/African American)

  - **March 25** – International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade (Black/African American)

  - **March 31** – Cesar Chavez Day (Hispanic/Latino) & International Transgender Day of Visibility (LGBTQ2+)

  - **Date Varies/Country** – Equal Pay Day (Recognized on the Date When Women Catch Up to Wages of Men) (Women)

- April

  - **All Month** – Arab American Heritage Month & Celebrate Diversity Month

  - **April 6** – International Asexuality Day (LGBTQ2+)

- **2nd Friday** – Day of Silence (LGBTQ2+)

- **April 15** – Jackie Robinson Day (Black/African American)

- **April 26** – Lesbian Visibility Day (LGBTQ2+)

- **April 30** – El Día de los Niños (Hispanic/Latino – Mexico)

- **4th Weekend** – Gathering of Notions (Native American)

- May

  - **All Month** – Women's Health Month (Women) & Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (Asian/Pacific Islander) & National Military Appreciation Month (Military/Veteran) & Older Americans Month (Generational/Seasoned Professional)

  - **Dates Vary** – National Women's Health Week (Women) & Asian Gold Ribbon Day (Asian/Pacific Islander)

  - **May 1** – Loyalty Day (Military/Veteran)

  - **1st Week** – Public Service Recognition Week (Military/Veteran)

  - **May 5** – Cinco de Mayo (Hispanic/Latino - Mexico)

  - **May 8** – Victory in Europe Day (Military/Veteran)

  - **May 12** – Military Spouse Appreciation Day (Military/Veteran)

  - **May 17** – International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Lesbophobia and Transphobia (LGBTQ2+)

  - **May 19** – Asian & Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (Asian/Pacific Islander)

  - **May 20** – Armed Forces Day (Military/Veteran)

- **May 21** – World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development
- **May 24** – Pansexual & Panromantic Awareness and Visibility Day (LGBTQ2+)
- **May 25** – African Freedom Day (Black/African American)
- **May 28** – International Day of Action for Women's Health (Women)
- **May 31** – Memorial Day (Military/Veteran)
- June
  - **All Month** – Black Music Appreciation Month (Black/African American) & Indigenous Peoples Month (Native American) & LGBTQ+ Pride Month (LGBTQ2+) & Men's Health Month
  - **Date Varies by Country** – PRIDE Day (LGBTQ2+)
  - **2nd Sunday** – Race Unity Day & National Puerto Rican Day (Hispanic/Latino)
  - **June 12** – Loving Day (Black/African American)
  - **June 14** – Army Birthday (Military/Veteran)
  - **June 19** – Juneteenth (Freedom/Emancipation Day) (Black/African American)
  - **June 21** – National Indigenous Peoples Day (Native American)
- July
  - **All Month** – National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month (Black/African American)
  - **July 14** – International Non-Binary People's Day (LGBTQ2+)
- August
  - **All Month** – International Civility Awareness Month

- **Date Varies** – Black Women's Equal Pay Day (Recognized on the Date When Women Catch up to Wages of Men) (Black/African American)

- **August 4** – Coast Guard Birthday (Military/Veteran)

- **August 9** – International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

- **August 21** – National Senior Citizens Day (Generational/Seasoned Professional)

- **August 26** – Women's Equality Day (Women)

- September

  - **All Month** – National Recover Month & Filipino-American Heritage Month (Asian/Pacific Islander)

  - **September 15 - October 15** – National Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month (Hispanic/Latino)

  - **September 16** – Mexican Independence Day (Hispanic/Latino - Mexico)

  - **September 16** – September 23rd – Bisexual Awareness Week (LGBTQ2+)

  - **September 18** – Air Force Birthday (Military/Veteran) & International Equal Pay Day (Women)

  - **September 22** – American Businesswomen's Day (Women)

  - **September 23** – Celebrate Bisexuality Day (LGBTQ2+)

  - **September 26** – European Day of Language

  - **September 30** – Orange Shirt Day (Native American)

- October

  - **All Month** – Domestic Violence Awareness Month (Women) & LGBTQ History Month (LGBTQ2+) & Global Diversity Awareness Month

- **Dates Vary** – Latina Equal Pay Day (Recognized on the Date When Women Catch Up to the Wages of Men) (Hispanic/Latino)

- **1st Week** – National Diversity Week

- **October 8** – International Lesbian Day (LGBTQ2+)

- **October 9** – Indigenous Peoples' Day (Native American)

- **October 11** – National Coming Out Day (LGBTQ2+)

- **October 12** – Día de la Raza/Día de la Hispanidad (Hispanic/Latino – Mexico, Spain, Central and South America)

- **October 13** – Navy Birthday (Military/Veteran)

- **October 15** – National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (Hispanic/Latino)

- **October 17** – Black Poetry Day (Black/African American)

- **3rd Monday** – Multicultural Diversity Day

- **3rd Wednesday** – International Pronouns Day (LGBTQ2+)

- **3rd Thursday** – Spirit Day (LGBTQ2+)

- **October 26** – Intersex Awareness Day (LGBTQ2+)

- **Last Full Week** – Ace Week (LGBTQ2+)

- November

  - **All Month** – National Native American, American Indian, and Alaskan Native Heritage Month (Native American) & Trans Awareness Month (LGBTQ2+) & National Family Caregivers Month & Movember (Men's Health Awareness Month)

- **November 1** – Job Action Day (Generational/Seasoned Professional)

- **November 1 - November 2** – Día de los Muertos (Hispanic/Latino – Mexico, North, South, and Central America) **1st Sunday** – Trans Parent Day (LGBTQ2+)

- **November 8** – Intersex Solidarity Day (LGBTQ2+)

- **November 10** – Marine Corps Birthday (Military/Veteran)

- **November 11** – Veterans Day (Military/Veteran)

- **November 13 - November 19** – Transgender Awareness Week (LGBTQ2+)

- **November 14** – Independence Day (Asian/Pacific Islander - Cambodia)

- **November 15** – Roc Your Mocs (Native American)

- **November 19** – Red Shawl Day (Native American)

- **November 20** – Revolution Day (Hispanic/Latino - Mexico) & Black Awareness Day (in Brazil) (Black/African American) & Transgender Day of Remembrance (LGBTQ2+)

- **November 25** – International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (Women)

- December

  - **All Month** – Universal Human Rights Month

  - **December 2** – International Day for the Abolition of Slavery/Human Trafficking

  - **December 6** – Spain Constitution Day (Hispanic/Latino - Spain)

  - **December 8** – Pansexual Pride Day (LGBTQ2+)

  - **December 10** – International Human Rights Day

  - **December 26 – January 1** – Kwanzaa (Black/African American)

Examples of intersectionality initiatives and events can be found in the BRG Intersectionality Fact Sheet [link to: https://disabilityin.org/resource/brg-intersectionality-fact-sheet/]

Ensure D&I is including disability inclusion and is engaging with employees with disabilities as part of their broader inclusion events.

Formalized Stage

- Ensure there is an avenue for regions/sub-groups within disability ERG to have a voice (sub-group formation) [Refer to ERG structure information]

- Develop peer recognition programs for disability inclusion.

- Video-based disability sensitivity training for recruiters, managers, and HR.

- Offer social/emotional learning programs for adults.

- Educate various teams across the organization on the need for accessibility review (internal/external) (technology/physical)

- Listening Sessions: ERG to hear what employees with disabilities and allies need; ensure that the queries and responses can lead to "Actions." If needed, follow up with targeted focus groups.

- Begin informal mentoring or reverse mentoring within ERG for employees with disabilities.

    - While you don't always need to consider title or level for a mentor to be a mentor, reverse mentoring can be beneficial for senior leaders to hear from diverse individuals and have a safe space to ask questions and learn about what is needed to take back to their business/department.

- Broaden reach of internal events to celebrate diversity/ disability within the organization

    - Consider using internal speakers to story-tell their own disability journey or relation to disability, highlight employees.

- Consider using external speakers to raise topics that will encourage internal discussion (Podcasts, Media Influencers, YouTube Videos/TV Show Clips [with permission], Documentaries, local congress representatives).

- Metric – # events hosted

- Metric – # ERG members attending/# non-ERG members attending

- Provide training/education sessions to stakeholders/partners (TA, other ERGs, etc.)

- Metric – # trainings

- Metric – # attendees

- Metric – # How many? How well attended?

Operational Stage

- Self-ID campaign input and/or participation

  - [Refer to Workforce/Formalized Stage: Self-ID resource Information.]

  - Metric: % employee population who self-identify as having a disability

- Survey employees with disabilities to better understand their needs (benefits, product/system accessibility)

  - If "leadership" scored low in the survey regarding disability-specific issues, plan trainings or processes to improve leadership empathy.

  - If "employee support" is voted low, plan trainings or processes for employees.

  - If "company processes" score low, craft solutions *move with survey.

- Within the BRG, create an advisory panel to provide consulting and input in universal design, web/product accessibility, marketing collateral and design.

  - Encourage/Drive Accessibility Reviews

  - Influence/work with IT to review accessibility of software/systems/applications (internal/external) and have them test and/or assist with systems testing.

  - Ensure accessible meetings and offsite: Consider captioning for video calls and making sure you are using accessible video calling programs.

  - Check documents and email correspondences for accessibility (Trainings and best practices shared).

  - Influence drive to improve accessibility of 3rd party products.

  - Metric – # trainings/meetings to drive effort

  - Metric – # systems/processes reviewed for accessibility

Integrated Stage

- Review employee engagement scores

- Leverage existing survey data for employees with disabilities; overlay questions (Are you a leader or member of an ERG/BRG?)

- Drive actionable process to remedy any "gaps" seen in the survey.

- Influence disability inclusion in HR policies (including caregivers), working practices and environment.

- Serve as sounding board for individual/workplace accommodations

  - Influence creation of workplace accommodations process

- Support escalations related to accommodations to help resolve.

- Recognition/Awards for disability inclusion champions

  - Examples can include:
    - Ally/ies of the Year
    - ERG Chapter(s) of the Year
    - External Partner(s) of the Year
    - Global ERG Leader(s) of the Year
    - Global ERG of the Year
    - D&I Champion(s)

- Develop formal [mentoring program](#) for employees with disabilities to improve retention, performance evaluations, promotions

- Work with job coaches to inform them on company processes/programs that could be leveraged/modified

  - Establish natural supports including assistance, relationships, materials and interactions within the workplace for employees who have job coaches.

- Influence formation of accessibility lead/team; Ensure accessibility of internal products.

  - Metric – # contributions to accessibility team efforts

- Utilize (if you have access) or advocate for use of self-ID data to influence culture, programs.

  - Use KPI's to track participation and encourage more to join. You can also use the data to map where those who self-ID sit within the organization's hierarchy.

Dynamic Stage

- Focus on People Management Development for employees with disabilities, include in succession planning process.

- Enable remote work culture.

- Destigmatize mental health.

  - Three Actions to be a Mental Health Champion and Ally

  - Disability:IN & NILG Webinar: Mental Health in the Workplace

  - Minority Mental Wellness – Disability:IN Webinar

  - Women and Mental Illness

  - Roadmap to Mental Wellness in the Workplace

- Help HR identify line managers who have the right attitude and training to support disability inclusion efforts.

- Influence and increase employee participation in self-ID campaigns.

  - Build relationships with senior leaders and executives as well to encourage disclosing and participation in campaigns.

- Business seeks out advice from advisory panel.

  - Metric – # inquiries to advisory panel

Business: Customer/Clients

Foundational Stage

- Identifying and recommend Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (DOBE's) to procurement to serve as vendors.

    - Disability:IN Supplier Diversity Program

    - See examples of Supplier Diversity Partner Portals

- Identify and recommend accessible programs and software.

- Connect with supply chain team to recommend inclusion of diverse partners in third party ecosystems.

- Understand and share accessibility standards (ADA, WCAG 2.0, W3C process, Section 508, CVAA):

    - ADA – Past, Present, & Future: Resources

    - 503 Checklist

    - Procure Access Initiative Infographic

    - Building Blocks of an Accessible Procurement Program

    - Accessible Procurement Questions

    - Webinar: A Conversation on Digital Accessibility in the Workplace & Marketplace

    - Six Tips to Keep In Mind When Creating Accessible Virtual Meetings

    - Creating Accessible Social Media Content

- Accessible Technology – Procurement Toolkit

- Webinar: Accessibility: Essential to the Physical, Hybrid, and Remote Workplace

- Webinar: How to Implement Digital Accessibility

- Best Known Methods for Creating Accessible Digital Microsoft Teams Meetings – Resource from Inclusion Works

- Creating Accessible Digital Zoom Meetings – Resource from Inclusion Works

- Best Practices for Accessible, Inclusive Communications

- Digital Accessibility Statement Best Practices

- Purchasing and Licensing Accessible Video Conferencing Platforms that Work for Everyone

- Questions for Captioning and Transcription Vendors During Procurement Process

- Develop inclusive language guide for internal communication and marketing teams.

  - Disability inclusion posters, social graphics, inclusive illustrations and inclusive stock photography are available in the Disability:IN Resources Library.

Formalized Stage

- Disabled-owned companies listed in supplier roster and create pipeline of companies representing individuals with disabilities as vendors.

  - Disability:IN Supplier Diversity Program

  - The Economic Impact of Certified Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (DOBEs)

  - Webinar: Accessible Procurement: An Essential Element of Disability Inclusion on GAAD and Every Day

- [Supplier Certification Document Checklist](#)

  - Metric – # disability owned suppliers on roster.

- Leveraging supplier diversity to win commercial work.

- Educate communications and marketing teams on inclusive language.

- Influence existing marketing campaigns to ensure inclusion of people with disabilities.

  - Metric – How often contributed

  - Metric – # times disability is included in marketing collateral, advertising

  - Metric – # campaigns including this population as part of their reach

Operational Stage

- Outsourcing to DOBEs/disability-focused companies.

  - Metric – # DOBEs used as vendor.

  - Metric - $ spend using DOBEs as vendors.

- Educate procurement and internal/external development teams on need to follow accessibility standards.

- Ensure accessibility of marketing collateral/campaigns.

Integrated Stage

- Measuring and documenting loyalty and performance of employees/vendors with disabilities.

- Include measurement of disability inclusion in appraisals

    - Hiring, promotion rates, ERG support, disability inclusion efforts, inclusion leadership, achievement of ERG goals.

- Ensure accessibility of internal products; serve as source of testing, evaluation, advice to UX teams.

    - Metric – How often contributed.

- Influencing accessibility for products built and/or services provided by the company for public consumption

    - Serve as source of testing, evaluation, advice to UX teams.

    - Metric – How often contributed.

Dynamic Stage

- Recommend and implement productivity and process improvements.

- Impact manager effectiveness of disability inclusion.

- Host events with clients/vendors who share similar values.

- Returning a percentage of revenue from commercial wins back into ERG budget and/or other disability inclusion efforts.

- Internal teams seek out ERG prior to procuring new systems/products.

- Influence drive to improve accessibility of 3rd party products/services used by the company.

- Procurement, IT, internal/external development teams seek out ERG prior to development/launch of new systems, products to review accessibility.

Community: External Outreach

Foundational Stage

- Attend disability conferences and events.

    - Metric – # events; # employees in attendance at each event

- Partner with disability focused Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) such as Disability:IN.

- Connect with other (best practice) recognized disability ERGs.

- Disability:IN Corporate/Inclusion Works Partners are invited to join the E/BRG Leadership Committee.

- Employees/ERG members volunteer to support NGOs.

    - Metric – # employees/# hours/year over year improvement)

- Offer paid volunteer hours for employees to support NGOs.

    - Metric – # paid volunteer hours

Formalized Stage

- Represent the company at disability conferences and events

    - Metric – # events; # employees in attendance at each event

- Engage in co-branding activities with NGOs.

- Offer in-kind donations or pro-bono services to NGOs.

- Sponsor fundraising events benefiting NGOs.

- Support disability-specific NGOs; participate in events.

  - Metric – # events attended/# employees in attendance/year over year

- Partner/co-sponsor events with ERGs from other companies.

- Partner or participate with mentorship programs involving schools and higher education.

  - Mentorship Best Practices

Operational Stage

- Participate on panels at conferences and other events to discuss disability inclusion.

  - Metric – # panels/events

  - Metric – employee level participating

Integrated Stage

- Set targets and document success with in-kind donations or pro-bono services to NGOs/ensure disability is part of Corporate Giving Campaign.

  - Metric – # donations/services

  - Metric – amount of funding; year over year

- Engage in sponsorship of disability inclusion events/conferences.

- Show public support for disability rights by the company.

- Board participation for disability-focused NGO.

- Develop mentorship programs for individual with disabilities outside the organization

- This can include students in school, non-profits or other local organizations outside of your own organization.

Dynamic Stage

- Utilize and seek guidance from NGOs to assist in integrating the needs of individuals with disabilities into product/service development.

- Maximizing media exposure of disability inclusion by company.

- Participating in standards bodies and government forums to further the inclusion of people with disabilities.

DISABILITY INCLUSION THROUGH THE EMPLOYMENT LIFE CYCLE RESOURCES

Part I: Disability Inclusion through the Employment Life Cycle Resources

In order to inform each phase of the Employment Life Cycle, the ERG/BRG can do a stakeholder analysis for each of the four stages. The ERG/BRG can forge partnerships with HR around learning and development teams and human capital management. ERG/BRG members can support managers during each employment phase and help showcase managers who excel in supporting employees with disabilities.

The Employment Life Cycle: The Four Phases

Phase I: Employee Affinity Groups Advance the Company's Disability Outreach & Recruitment

- Engage Disability ERG/BRG Members in Creating Recruiting Materials that Attract Qualified Job Applicants with Disabilities

    - Invite them to serve as models, recruit co-workers and provide resources for professional models with disabilities for photoshoots for illustrating print and web-based recruiting materials

    - Ask them to provide positive quotes on disability inclusion and their own personal experiences during the recruiting process

    - Request them to engage in the development and the review of all recruiting materials to ensure disability appropriate statements and language

    - Request them to review all recruiting materials for accessibility

Resources:

BRG Members Sourced for Messaging Materials

- BAE Systems: 'I Am' Poster Template

- BAE Systems: 'D&I Blog Article'

- BAE Systems: 'I Am' Dialogue

- Walmart: 'Moving Forward' E-Newsletter

- "Walmart Celebrates Associates of All Abilities"

- Walmart "Real Associates: Charlie Parker

- MassMutual's "See the Real Me"

- EY: 'Looking for a Disabilities-Friendly Workplace'

Engaging BRG Members to Help Create and Review Recruiting & Outreach Materials for Disability Appropriate Statements and Language

- Microsoft

- Merck Humans for Health: Jay Schiller

- Engage Disability ERG/BRG Members in Talent Acquisition

  - Invite them to present at disability career fairs, college events, and community events

  - Invite them to participate in disability training for company recruiters with emphasis on interviewing job candidates with disabilities that impact communication such as autism, certain psychiatric disabilities, deafness, and speech disabilities

  - Ask them to serve as mentors for interns with disabilities and/or invite them to participate in disability mentoring programs

Invite them to participate in interviews with applicants with disabilities to raise the comfort level of applicants around disclosure, requesting accommodations and model that employees with disabilities have the same opportunities for a productive career as employees without disabilities.

Resources:

- EntryPoint

- Project SEARCH

- Talent Acquisition

- GettingHired

- Microsoft Hiring through Training Cohort Microsoft Inclusive Hiring; Microsoft Wants Autistic Coders

- Disability:IN NextGen Exchange

Phase II: Employee Affinity Groups Assist with On-Boarding New Employees with Disabilities

- Engage Disability ERG/BRG Members in Pre-First Day Planning:

  - Invite them to provide strategies on effective communications around accommodations with newly hired employees with disabilities including the physical plant as well as information and communication technology accessibility

  - Engage them in training for managers and work units of the in-coming employees with disabilities

  - Invite them to provide counsel on the types of disability-specific benefits and resources, including ERG information, that should be in new employee on-boarding packet

- Engage Disability ERG/BRG Members in New Employee Orientation:

  - Invite them to serve as ambassadors to welcome new hires during initial orientation

  - Include them to serve for the first several months as ongoing guides to the company culture, events and programs

Phase III: Employee Affinity Groups Assist with On-Boarding New Employees with Disabilities

- Engage Disability ERG/BRG Members in planning, developing and executing training and career advancement opportunities and programs to ensure that individuals with disabilities are fully included and accessibility and inclusion requirements are addressed

  - Invite them to participate on the planning teams that develop training programs and materials and innovative career building opportunities

  - Invite them to serve as trainers or presenters

  - Feature images of ERG/BRG members in promotional materials for training sessions as well as in the training materials

- Source the ERG/BRG for stories on successful ERG/BRG employees whose careers advanced after self-disclosure and participation in career advancement opportunities & use these stories to promote training and career advancement opportunities and programs ('What's In It for Me')

- Engage Disability ERG/BRG Members in Developing/Reviewing Policies & Practices that Impact Employees with Disabilities

  - Invite them to initial conversations on the value and effectiveness of current disability management policies and practices

  - Include them on the planning and development team that develops or revises disability management policies and practices

- Engage Disability ERG/BRG Members in Mentoring and Sponsoring Programs

  - Invite seasoned ERG/BRG members to serve as mentors to newer employees with disabilities

  - Engage ERG/BRG members in Reverse Mentoring initiatives

- Resources:

  - Download: IBM Reverse Mentoring: Reinforcing Collaboration Between Generations.

  - Download: IBM Volunteers with Youth with Disabilities.

Phase IV: Affinity Groups Enrich Termination & Post-Employment Activities for Employees with Disabilities

- Engage ERG/BRG Members in reviewing Exit Interview Questions and Developing Informal Exit Interviews to Gain Helpful DataEmployees with Disabilities

  - Invite ERG/BRG members to review exit interviews for any indications that the person's disability may have influenced the employee to terminate employment

- Invite ERG/BRG members to assist in the development of an exit interview to assure that it is structured to create comfort in self-disclosure around any underlying reasons for the departure

- Engage ERG/BRG members to formulate the questions that can address questions that the departing employee may not be comfortable answering such as why the questions are being asked, where the information will go, who owns the information and if the owner can make change

- Leverage the ERG/BRG to boost retention of Employees with Disabilities

  - Engage ERG/BRG in analyzing the culture of disability acceptance

- Engage the ERG/BRG Members to Help Plan Alumni Events & Provide Speakers

  - Invite ERG/BRG to serve on planning team for Alumni Events

  - Engage ERG/BRG in recommending or providing speakers for Alumni Events

Part II: Bring Your Whole Self to Work: Enhancing Job Satisfaction, Career Advancement and Company Productivity

When a company disability-focused ERG/BRG develops effective strategies and tools to enable its members to bring their whole selves to work, it will better serve its members and its company. Employees who are able to bring their whole selves to work as competent and proud individuals with disabilities may find that they are better able to focus on their jobs, advance their careers and contribute to their company's success. Resources that the ERG/BRGs of the Disability:IN partner companies have found useful are listed under three categories:

Messaging

- On-Line Disability Inclusive Messages, Testimonials, and Profiles

    - [Microsoft – Diversity](#)

- Videos/Selfies: Personal Statements on an Inclusive Company

    - "I AM" BAE Systems – ABLE Network ERG profile that shows disability is just one small aspect of who we are. [Download Word Document](#)

    - D&I blog article example where employees share their personal story and experiences, with an interactive question at the end. [Download Word Document](#)

    - "I AM" Dialogue that is a mini-version that incorporates both the "I AM" poster and employee's personal story. [Download PowerPoint](#)

    - ["Work is a Beautiful Thing: Meet Patrick"](#)

    - ["Walmart Celebrates Associates of All Abilities"](#)

    - [Walmart's "Real Associates: Charlie Parker"](#)

    - ["RU Ok?"](#) Introduction and descriptions for how to recognize if a colleague may be struggling with mental health issues and how to have a supportive "r u ok?" conversation, and resources to refer to in and outside EY.

- Story Telling Programs

    - Alice Wong's Disability Visibility Project – [@SFdirewolf on X/Twitter](#)

    - [Lowe's Video Story on Marcus Tuck](#) (former CLMP mentee)

    - Speakers

    - [Damon Brooks Associates](#)

- John Register – @JFRegister on X/Twitter

- Photo Journalist Dan Habib

- Innovation & Inclusion Studies

  - "How Diversity Can Drive Innovation" by Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Melinda Marshall, & Laura Sherbin; Harvard Business Review

  - Frans Johannsons on Youtube

  - Frans Johansson Introduces "The Medici Effect" how diversity drives innovation. Go to www.themedicigroup.com for more information.

- Accessibility

  - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

  - Web Content Accessibility and Mobile Web Devices

  - Easy Checks – A First Review of Web Accessibility

  - ADA Checklist for New Lodging Facilities

  - Microsoft Public Commitment to Accessibility

- General Resources

  - Government Funded Materials such as the EARN ERG Toolkit

Exercises/Activities/Events

- Exercises

  - Windmills Training

- Activities

  - [Microsoft disAbility Scholarship](#)

- Events

  - Swag Ideas: eye glass wipes, jar openers

  - Post ERG/BRG created and sponsored events

  - [Microsoft Ability Summit Agenda](#)

  - [MassMutual 'See the Real Me' Marquee Event Playbook](#)

- Catchy Titles for diversity events:

  - "Be Yourself Everyone Else is Taken"

  - "Everyday Change of Everything"

Connecting/Building Trust/Getting There

- Building Trust

  - [Southwest Airlines 'Understanding Disabilities 101'](#)

  - General FAQs & Tip Sheets

    - ["RU Ok?"](#) Introduction and descriptions for how to recognize if a colleague may be struggling with mental health issues and how to have a supportive "r u ok?" conversation, and resources to refer to in and outside EY.

- Self-ID

    - [BAE 'I Am' poster – Jason Bryn](#)

    - [BAE "I Am" Dialogue – Jason Bryn](#)

    - BAE Blog ["True vision is living life without limits"](#)

    - [Walmart 'Moving Forward' Article by Russell Shaffer](#)

Part III: Additional ERG/BRG Resources

Company Websites & Tools

- [3M: Diversity and Inclusion [Website]](#)

- [3M NEON: New Employee Opportunity Network [PNG image]](#)

- [3M Diversity Slide Deck [PPTX]](#)

- [EY 'Together We Make Things Happen' Professional Networks Guide [PDF]](#)

Disability Acronyms

- **503** - References the Section in the Rehabilitation Act requiring affirmation action in hiring employees with disabilities

- **508** - References the Section in the Rehabilitation Act requiring federal agencies to purchase accessible technology

- **AAPD** - The American Association of People with Disabilities

- **ADA** - Americans with Disabilities Act

- **ADA AG**- AG Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines

- **ADLs** - Activities of Daily Living

- **ASL** - American Sign Language

- **AT** - Assistive Technology

- **CART** - Communication Access Real-time Translation

- **DEI** - Disability Equality Index

- **DOBE** - Disability-Owned Business Entrepreneur

- **DSDP** - Disability Supplier Diversity Program

- **E&IT** - Electronic & Information Technology

- **EARN** - Employer Assistance & Resource Network on Disability Inclusion

- **GFG** - Going for the Gold

- **ICT** - Information & Communications Technology

- **ILC** - Independent Living Center (aka CIL)

- **IT** - Information Technology

- **JAN** - Job Accomodation Network

- **NCD** - National Council on Disability

- **NDEAM** - National Disability Employment Awareness Month

- **ODEP** - Office of Disability Employment Policy

- **OFCCP** - Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs

- **PAS** - Personal Assistance Services (aka PCA – Personal Care Assistance)
- **PTSD** - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- **RLA** - Rising Leadership Academy
- **TBI** - Traumatic Brain Injury
- **TDD** - Telecommunication Device for the Deaf
- **TRS** - Telecommunications Relay Services or Voice Relay Services (VRS)
- **UD** - Universal Design
- **VR** - Vocational Rehabilitation
- **VRS** - Voice Relay Services or Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS)
- **WRP** - Workforce Recruitment Program