CULTIVATING ABILITIES

HIRING MANAGER HANDBOOK
RECRUITING AND RETAINING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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stalbert.ca

City of St. Albert
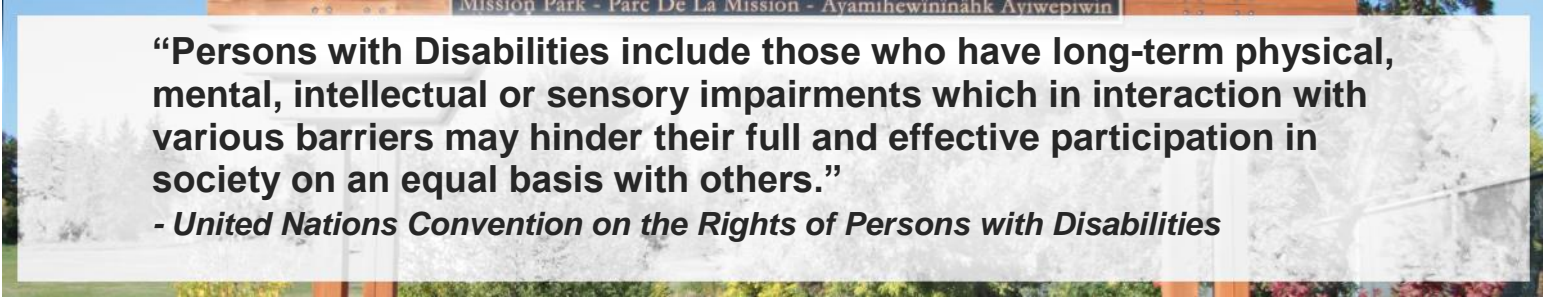Cultivate Life

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HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

As a hiring manager, you want to recruit the best people. At the City of St. Albert, we hire people with the skills that help us be innovative and deliver excellent service. In addition, we want to attract individuals who want to make a difference and are loyal, reliable, and willing to learn. We are a strong and supportive team and through inclusive hiring we make St. Albert a great place to live and work. The City is committed to hiring persons with disabilities and strives to provide a respectful, inclusive, and barrier free workplace.

Over the past few years the City has hired persons with disabilities into meaningful employment opportunities. These employees have demonstrated commitment, dedication and have contributed to the success of the City. Persons with disabilities are an overlooked source of potential employees – they want to work, and have the skills you are looking for.

This handbook will support you in developing workable solutions and increase the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities. Our practical 'how to' approach to recruiting and retaining persons with disabilities includes seven components of the recruitment and retention cycle. You can review and use the information on each cycle as it applies to your stage of the recruitment.

This handbook should be one tool in your recruitment toolbox. To maximize its benefit, you are encouraged to connect with your Human Resources Business Partner and if applicable, the community agency support staff involved in the recruitment of persons with disabilities.

> **"Persons with Disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."**
> *- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*

Benefits of Inclusive Hiring

- By investing in diversity and inclusion, the City will increase employee engagement, empowerment and efficiency.
- By attracting, engaging, and retaining the unique attributes of employees and leveraging their respective expertise and experiences, we can achieve our desired outcomes.
- Fostering innovation and building trusted relationships enhances the reputation of the City as being an employer of choice.
- Being an inclusive employer creates a team environment that is accepting and willing to accommodate differences of many types.
- Persons with disabilities are known to be dedicated, loyal, hardworking and productive.
- Being an inclusive employer creates pride in the community and the corporation.

OUR GOALS

1. *We are committed to recruiting and retaining persons with disabilities.*
   - Persons with disabilities are an untapped workforce and are available to meet growing labour and skills shortage. They are dedicated and talented individuals who bring diversity to the workplace and have a positive impact on staff moral. Through more accessible recruitment practices and targeted recruitment initiatives the City will increase the employment and retention of persons with disabilities.

2. *We are an employer where accessibility for all is ensured through the reduction and elimination of barriers.*
   - This includes the removal of physical, technical and attitudinal barriers within the City.

3. *We strive to provide a respectful and inclusive workplace, free from discrimination and harassment.*
   - Training and educating hiring managers and all employees on diversity and inclusion serves to address concerns of fear and resistance in addition to building a welcoming and inclusive workplace. Training activities should be available and accessible to all employees with disabilities.

4. *We ensure that policies, programs, and strategies are inclusive and support the City being able to offer a workplace where persons with disabilities thrive and are supported as employees.*
   - Policy has a critical role in supporting the inclusion of persons with disabilities now and in the future.

HOW TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Understanding the benefits of hiring persons with disabilities is important as we continue to cultivate an inclusive workplace. Hiring managers often indicate they are not sure how to begin recruiting, what type of assistance is available, and are sometimes fearful of taking the step toward inclusive hiring.

Dispelling Fears, Myths and Attitudes

Perceptions, bias, fears and lack of awareness and knowledge of disability issues among supervisors and staff are some of the key barriers to employing persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities consistently report that employer attitude is the most common barrier they must overcome to be successful in the workplace. Many hiring managers are not sure what to expect if they hire a person with a disability. The following information is provided to help dispel fears:

Myth	Reality
A person with a disability can't keep up with other workers.	90% of persons with disabilities rated average or better on job performance than their on-disabled colleagues. *
A person with a disability is likely to miss a lot of work.	86% of persons with disabilities rated average or better on attendance than their non-disabled colleagues. *
My staff wouldn't want to work with a person with a disability.	Persons with disabilities bring diversity into the workplace, which has a distinct and positive effect on staff morale.
A person with a disability cannot work in a position requiring physical labour.	Only 10.5% of persons with disabilities have mobility related issues. **

Hiring a person with a disability will require changing my workplace.	The vast majority of persons with disabilities who are currently employed require no special workplace accommodations.
A person with a disability will have more accidents on the job.	98% of persons with a disability rate average or better in work safety than their non-disabled colleagues. *
Accommodations make it too expensive to hire a person with a disability.	Accommodations for persons with disabilities are generally very inexpensive and are tax deductible.
Persons with disabilities don't really want to work.	Staff retention is 72% higher among persons with disabilities, saving millions of dollars each year in recruitment and training costs.

* work.asn.au/disability/people/index.cfm

**PALS survey, Stats Can, 2001

Understanding Types of Disabilities

There are many types of disabilities. The following provides a general overview of the different types of disabilities individuals may have. Individuals may be born with or have developed these types of disabilities because of an illness and/or injury.

Visual impairment includes some degree of sight loss, loss of central vision, distorted, or total vision loss. Individuals may use assistive technology, alternative formatting of materials, captioning and/or braille for assistance. As you provide direction, it is important to speak clearly and be descriptive with instructions.

Hearing impairment includes mild hearing loss to profound deafness. Individuals may use hearing aids, cues from lip reading, sign language, captioning and/or an interpreter. When speaking with a person that is hearing impaired, look directly at the individual and speak clearly in a normal tone of voice. Use short simple sentences.

Learning disabilities are neurologically based and may interfere with the acquisition and development of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning and/or mathematical skills. Persons may use assistive technology, alternative formatting and notetaking for assistance. When working with a person with a learning disability speak clearly in a normal tone of voice. Be specific and check for understanding. To provide assistance with tasks, explain and show them what to do, provide the person some time to practice what you are telling them. To provide reassurance, provide encouragement to the person.

Intellectual disabilities are a diverse group of chronic conditions that are due to mental or physical impairments. Developmental disabilities cause individuals living with them many difficulties in certain areas of life, especially in language, mobility, learning, self-help, and independent living. It is important to be patient, flexible, and supportive. Take time to understand the individual and make sure they understand you. Use plain language and be prepared to repeat what you say, orally or in writing. Offer assistance and wait for the person to accept the offer, do not "over assist" or be patronizing. Allow them some extra time to decide.

Physical disabilities can range from loss of fine motor coordination to partial or total paralysis. They can affect physical functioning, mobility, dexterity or stamina. At times a physical disability is the result of another type of disability. These can include paralysis, congenital malformations, degenerative diseases, and movement disorders. If speaking with someone in a wheelchair, put yourself at the user's eye level. Do not lean on the wheelchair or any other device. Offer assistance if you recognize someone is struggling with a door, lifting an object, etc.

Mental health disabilities include bi-polar, borderline personality disorders, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, eating disorders, and schizophrenia. These disabilities are often not visible. Depending on the disability you may need to repeat what you have said and ask the person to restate it back to you. If the person seems anxious or distracted move to a quieter location.

Chronic health conditions generally stem from a dysfunction in the internal organs of the cardiovascular, digestive or endocrine systems. They can include acquired immune deficiency syndromes, allergies, asthma, cancer, cerebral palsy, Crohn's disease, diabetes, epilepsy, fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome, migraine headaches, muscular dystrophy, and sleep disorders.

Duty to Accommodate

The Alberta Human Rights Act recognizes that all people are equal in dignity, rights and responsibilities, regardless of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation.

Accommodation means making changes to certain rules, standards, policies, workplace cultures and physical environments to ensure that they don't have a negative effect on a person because of the person's mental or physical disability, religion, gender or any other protected background.

Accommodation is a way to balance the diverse needs of individuals and groups with the needs of organizations and businesses in our society. It may cause a degree of inconvenience, disruption and expense to an employer. However, accommodation to the point of undue hardship is required by law.

Some examples of an accommodation include:
- Time off for extended illness
- Use of a service dog for a person with a visual impairment
- Use of a wheelchair for a person with mobility problems
- Purchasing or modifying tools, equipment or aids, as necessary
- Altering the premises to make them accessible
- Altering aspects of the job, such as job duties
- Offering flexible work schedules
- Offering rehabilitation programs
- Allowing time off for recuperation
- Transferring employees to different jobs
- Hiring an assistant
- Adjusting policies

What is undue hardship?
Undue hardship occurs if accommodation would create onerous conditions for an employer or service provider. For example, intolerable financial costs or serious disruption to business. An employer must make considerable effort to find an appropriate accommodation for an employee. Some hardship may be necessary in making an accommodation. Please contact your Human Resources Business Partner for assistance when working through an accommodation request.

T.A.L.K.

A. SAMPSON - "SERVING CLIENTS WITH DISABILITIES"

T - Take the time
A - Ask, don't assume
L - Listen attentively
K - Know the person's needs

Identifying Barriers

Before we can remove barriers in our workplace, we need to know where they are. Some barriers can be easily identified and removed once you are aware of them. Others are more difficult to recognize and even more difficult to eliminate.

Typical barriers to employment:

Architectural and physical barriers are the features of buildings or spaces that cause problems for people with disabilities.

Examples include:

- Hallways and doorways that are too narrow for a person using a wheelchair, electric scooter or walker.
- Poor lighting for people with low vision.
- Doorknobs that are difficult for people with arthritis to grasp.
- Telephones that are not equipped with telecommunications devices for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.

Information or communication barriers develop when a person can't easily access information.

Examples include:

- Print that is too small to read.
- Information that is not provided in multiple formats.
- Websites that can't be accessed by people who are not able to use keyboard or mouse.
- Signs that are not clear or easily understood.

Technology barriers occur when a technology can't be modified to support various assistive devices.

Examples include:

- A website that doesn't support screen-reading software.
- A video that doesn't include captioning for the deaf.

Organizational barriers are organizational policies, practices or procedures that discriminate against persons with disabilities.

Examples include:

- A hiring process that is not open to people with disabilities.
- Performance reviews that do not take workplace accommodations into account.

Attitudinal barriers are attitudes and beliefs that discriminate against people with disabilities. These are often the most challenging barriers persons with disabilities face in the workplace.

Examples include:

- Thinking persons with disabilities are not intelligent, skilled or educated.
- Assuming persons with disabilities are less able to handle everyday tasks.
- Feeling sorry for persons with disabilities, they want to be seen for their abilities.
- Being afraid of saying or doing the wrong thing.
- Being surprised that persons with disabilities can do ordinary things and take care of themselves.
- Assuming the type of disability negatively affects other senses. (e.g. shouting at someone because they are blind).
- Believing that persons with disabilities have unfair advantages at work, when they simply are receiving the accommodations they need to provide equal access to meaningful employment.
- Lowering expectations for persons with disabilities. This can limit their opportunities for challenging assignments that prepare them for promotions or career advancement.

Removing Barriers

Committing to making your area more open and accessible to persons with disabilities is a worthwhile process. You may choose to remove barriers one at a time and deal with employment issues as they arise. Others may make significant changes to the culture of the team and refocus their leadership as well as work practices. It's up to you to decide on the best approach for your area and your team – know that as you move towards a barrier-free workplace, you are on the right track!

OVERCOMING BIAS – CULTIVATING INCLUSION

A hidden – or implicit – bias is a preference for or against a person, thing, or group held at an unconscious level. This means we don't often know that our minds are holding onto this bias. In contrast, an overt – or explicit – bias is an attitude or prejudice that one endorses at a conscious level. Research on hidden bias reveals regardless of the best intentions, most people harbor deep-seated resistance to the "different." The difference can be defined by evident factors as race, gender, ethnicity, age or physical characteristics, or more subtle factors such as background, personality type or experiences.

The following are a few known biases that directly impact the workplace:

- **Affinity bias:** The tendency to warm up to people like ourselves.
- **Halo effect:** The tendency to think everything about a person is good because you like that person.
- **Perception bias**: The tendency to form stereotypes and assumptions about certain groups that make it impossible to make an objective judgement about members of those groups.
- **Confirmation bias:** The tendency for people to seek information that confirms pre-existing beliefs or assumptions.
- **Group think:** This bias occurs when people try too hard to fit into a group by mimicking others or holding back thoughts and opinions. This causes them to lose part of their identities and causes organizations to lose out on creativity and innovation.

How to Reduce Bias

Think Differently, Develop the Ability for Self Observation
Through self observation you can learn to explore awkwardness and discomfort. Instead of backing away, ask yourself why you feel a certain way. Recognize that as human beings, our brains make mistakes without us even knowing it. The new science of "unconscious bias" applies to how we perceive other people. We're all biased and becoming aware of these biases will help us mitigate them in the workplace.

Learn Differently
Seek out opportunities to immerse yourself and your team members in different environments outside everyone's comfort zone.

Act Differently, Hold Yourself and Team Accountable
Take deliberate actions that disrupt your normal process and help prevent biases from shaping your decisions and behaviour. Reframe conversations to focus on fair treatment and respect, and away from discrimination. Review every aspect of the employment life cycle for hidden bias – screening resumes, interviews, onboarding, assignment process, mentoring, performance evaluation, identifying high performers, promotion and termination.

Use of Language
Words can unintentionally convey negative attitudes or stereotypes. For example, the words "disabled" and "handicapped" do not mean the same thing. A disability is a limitation on an individual's ability to perform an activity. A handicap is an environmental or attitudinal barrier that limits a person's full participation.

Inclusive language recognizes that persons with disabilities are individuals. They are people first. Their disability does not define who they are or what they can achieve. Your choice of language and the way you interact with others is an important part of an inclusive workplace. Using inclusive language and understanding how to communicate effectively will help you create a positive working environment, where persons with disabilities feel welcome and accepted.

Note: It is correct to say, "persons with disabilities" not "the disabled" or "disabled person." Language such as "suffers from" or "afflicted by" should be avoided as it suggests a sense of hopelessness.

Don't Say	Say (use first person)
Handicapped, disabled, invalid	Person with a disability
Crippled, lame	Person who has ---- or person with ----
The blind	Person who is blind
Suffers hearing loss	Person who is hard of hearing
Mute	Person who communicates differently
Nuts, crazy	Person with a mental disability
Retarded, mentally retarded	Person with a developmental disability
Confined to a wheelchair	Wheelchair user
Normal	Non-disabled

Communication Tips

- Think about the language you use – treat persons with disabilities as individuals.
- Don't patronize persons with disabilities.
- Don't tell someone with a disability that you admire their courage and strength unless they've done something that you would compliment anyone on.
- Look at the person when addressing them. Avoiding eye contact only increases discomfort.
- Speak directly to the person, even if they are with an attendant or interpreter.
- Focus on work related topics, just as you would with employees who don't have disabilities.

GETTING STARTED
APPLYING THE INCLUSIVE HIRING LENS

An inclusive hiring lens is a tool for identifying and clarifying recruitment issues affecting persons with disabilities. The tool is used by hiring managers to assess and address the impact of hiring decisions as they relate to persons with disabilities.

The lens is a series of questions that are posed about hiring practices. The questions are focused on recruitment and employment to ensure that hiring practices:

- Are inclusive of persons with disabilities;
- Respect the rights and needs of persons with disabilities;
- Avoid unintended negative outcomes; and
- Reflect the goals of the City for equity and fairness for all.

DIVERSITY
Everyone is individual and different

EQUALITY
Equal access to opportunities

INCLUSION
Inclusion is a sense of belonging: feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best at work

The primary impact areas in the Inclusive Hiring Lens are:

- Preparation for position posting;
- Posting opportunities;
- Systemic, indirect discrimination and legal obligations;
- Interviewing;
- Hiring and Retaining

INCLUSIVE HIRING LENS

What can you do to recruit persons with disabilities and build an inclusive workplace? Focus on the person's ability, not the disability.

Pre-posting – Ensuring Inclusiveness

- What knowledge, skills, experience and diversity would enhance our teams and enhance our capacity to service the diversity of our customers?
- Does your current team reflect the diversity of the community we serve? Who is under-represented?
- Do job requirements and selection criteria unnecessarily limit who would qualify?
- Have you included respectful and inclusive responsibilities/competencies in the position description?
- Are we open to considering what new perspectives people from different backgrounds could bring to the position?

Postings – We are an Inclusive Employer

- Have we considered where best to post this employment opportunity to ensure that persons with disabilities can access it?
- Are competencies related to respect and inclusion included in the job requirements of the position?
- Do we encourage agencies and community partners to access the City's career website so that we can broaden the applicant pool from diverse groups, including persons with disabilities?

Interviews – See the Individual and Focus on Ability, Not the Disability

a. Are interview panels composed of individuals who bring diverse backgrounds and experiences relevant to the position?
b. Have we considered ways to reduce the barriers in the interview process to make it more welcoming and friendly? (i.e.: physically accessible, provide candidate a copy of the questions in advance)
c. Do we consider that people from different backgrounds may present different interview behaviours from what is expected but still have the skills to do the job?
d. Do you think about the language you use when conducting an interview and how you treat persons with disabilities as individuals?

e. Are you open to making accommodations if requested by a candidate? (i.e.: sign language interpreter, accessible location)

f. Are you familiar with the human rights legislation about questions that can and cannot be asked during an interview, along with alternative ways to phrase questions to get the necessary information?

Hiring and Retaining – Cultivating Abilities

a. Do you hire, retain and promote persons with disabilities?

b. What considerations do you look at when you hire and/or promote staff?

c. Do you ensure that support is provided to staff when they are faced with a workplace/performance challenge?

d. Do you encourage mentorship and learning opportunities within your team?

e. Are training opportunities provided to staff on an equal basis?

f. Do you ensure that staff are respectful and inclusive of others? Do you provide feedback when there is disrespect and exclusion among staff?

As you embark on recruiting new staff take a few moments to apply the inclusive hiring lens to ensure your recruitment efforts are inclusive of persons with disabilities.

"You learn from having employees with disabilities. Most of us without disabilities take things for granted and don't have a clue about some of the obstacles faced by others."
    - Inclusive Employer

DETERMINING JOB DESIGN AND JOB REQUIREMENTS

One of the most common accommodations required by persons with disabilities is some flexibility around job requirements. Often a person with a disability can perform all of the most important job requirements, but may have to work in an alternate way, on a different schedule or perhaps with some assistance. With some flexibility and understanding from the hiring manager, that person can do the job.

As an example, job design and requirements are often based on "the way it's always been done." Assessing and writing inclusive job requirements is not about compromising on what needs to be done, but considering how it can be done and who needs to do it.

Job Analysis

Job analysis is a process of assessing the essential components of any job prior to writing an inclusive and non-discriminatory job description, then interviewing and selecting a good candidate for the job.

Often community agencies that work with persons with disabilities have expertise and experience in job analysis. Your Human Resources Business Partner can assist you as well. As this step, will ultimately impact the other steps in successfully recruiting a person with a disability, it is worth taking some time to do this and involving others who can help you with the process.

To begin, describe in detail the tasks that are considered part of the job in question. The next step is to ask several questions about each job task as part of an assessment. This

"Indviduals with disabilities have diverse intrests, different abailities and strengths, and experience different challenges and barriers to employment"
- Alberta Employment First Strategy

kind of analysis helps show where job duties could be altered to accommodate a person with a disability. It is important to focus on the desired outcome of the job – not the methods traditionally used to accomplish the outcome.

Job analysis also helps you think beyond convenient "credentials" or standards – but not necessary requirements. Credentials such as "university degree required" can result in fully qualified candidates being screened out too soon. Assessing the true requirements of the job and keeping an open mind about how those requirements are fulfilled is a necessary first step in eliminating barriers in the recruitment process.

Job Carving

Job carving involves melding job seeker and employer needs through systemic workplace analysis and individualized career planning. Job carving begins with the concept of using a person's unique skills and abilities and matching those to an employment setting.

Job carving often frees up existing employees to concentrate on other tasks. An example may be removing more repetitive work from other positions to create a job for someone who works best at repetitive tasks.

Example: Reassignment of day to day reading to staff and assumption of more strategic and organizational planning enabled growth and development of staff and better utilized my skills and interests. (Manager who recently lost most of his vision).

Example: We have one employee who has a clearly defined role. The role was custom built based upon his skills. (Employer of an individual with a developmental disability).

Here are some things to consider for successful job carving:

- Changes in supervision requirements, such as more frequent instructions and guidance.
- Alternative methods of conveying job instructions and adding new tasks. Co-worker involvement and support, involvement of a community agency that works with employers to define roles, assist in training employees and ironing out some of the initial details.
- Job or work experience with defined time parameters.
- Stay positive. Be prepared to deal with some co-workers' negative perceptions about "make work" projects and short-term limited opportunities.

Example: One employee takes a bit more time to learn and remember tasks. A time is set out at the beginning of each day to review the work and discuss what needs to be done that day. New tasks are added as the employee becomes comfortable with the current tasks. (Manager of a fitness facility working with an employee with a developmental disability).

SELECTION PROCESS

From a job seeker's perspective, the selection process is stressful. For the hiring manager, it is often the process used to identify the candidate with the best qualifications for the job. By ensuring the selection process is based on careful analysis of the job requirements and having them incorporated into a job description, you will reduce the barriers to employing persons with disabilities. The selection criteria needs to be fair and applied consistently to all applicants.

Our goal is to find the best possible candidate for the job. In order to do so, we need to ensure that the interview and testing process does not inadvertently eliminate an excellent candidate because of his or her disability. As indicated earlier, reliance on credentials or over-emphasis on previous work experience can be problematic for persons with disabilities, whose vocational development experiences may be different from candidates without disabilities.

Interview Process

At the City, we use a "behaviour-based interviewing" approach in addition to asking about credentials and work history. We use this approach to look at the behaviours and competencies of the candidate. Some candidates may have minimal actual work experience, but may have an extremely strong aptitude for the job in question.

Interview Tips

- Ensure interview locations are accessible by people with mobility impairments or other disabilities.
- Ask all candidates in advance whether they have any needs that will require special support or accommodation during the interview.
- Be familiar with Alberta Human Rights Guidelines and Legislation about questions that can and cannot be asked.

- Ask questions that are specifically related to the job. The law prohibits general inquiries about health conditions. For example, a hiring manager can ask about physical ability, for instance only in the context of a job requirement – e.g., the job requires moving heavy objects or strenuous activity.
- Ensure that you are aware of your biases. Avoid making assumptions about whether a person can perform the essential functions of a role and allow candidates to explain how they will fulfill key aspects of a job.

A quick guide for appropriate interview questions:

Common Question Areas	Recommended	Not Recommended
Gender, marital status, family status	Availability for shift work, travel, etc.	Plans for marriage, family, childcare. Any inquiries specific to gender or marital status (including common-law relationships) or family status.
Race, colour, ancestry or place of origin	Legally permitted to work in Canada?	Place of birth, citizenship, racial origin, next of kin.
Name	Previous names, only if the information is needed to verify the applicant's past employment or education and to do a reference check.	Maiden name, "Christian" name, reference to origin of name, being related to another person by blood, marriage or adoption.
Language	Ability to communicate in any language specifically required by a job.	Other languages, when not required in a specific job.
Photograph	In rare situations, such as modeling and entertainment.	Requesting photographs (these can re-veal race, gender, etc.)
Clubs or Organizations	Membership in professional associations, clubs or organization, hobbies or interests, as long as they are job-related.	Specific inquiries about club and organization memberships that would indicate race, colour, religious beliefs, ancestry or place of origin.

Age	Old enough to work legally in Alberta?	Specific age of applicants who are 18 year or older, including retirement information.
Height and Weight	Describing job duties that require heavy lifting or other physical job requirements.	Minimum/maximum height and weight requirements/stipulations.
Disability	Indicating the job offer is contingent upon a satisfactory job-related medical ex-amination to determine capability to per-form the duties as outlined.	General disabilities, limitations, present or previous health problems, Workers' Compensation claims or sick leave or absence due to stress or mental or physical illness.
Smoking	Indicating the successful applicant will be required to work in a non-smoking environment.	Asthmatic or permanent respiratory conditions that may be affected by smoke.
Source of Income	Job-related information such as former employment.	Inquiries unrelated to the specific job to be performed.
Education	Educational institutions attended; nature and level of education achieved.	Inquiries about religious or racial affiliations of educational institution.
Religious Beliefs	Availability for shift work, travel, etc.	Inquiries about specific religious holidays observed by the applicant, customers observed, religious dress, etc.; requiring applicants to provide recommendations from a church or religious leader.

Taken from: albertahumanrights.ab.ca

MAKING INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE

You want to ensure your employees have access to important information such as a position description, directives, safe work practices and procedures, hazard assessments, and emergency procedures to name a few. Depending on the person's need, making information accessible can include using larger print, reading out loud, using captioning to video or using written notes, and using braille.

Additional communication tips:

- Talk directly to the person.
- Do not underestimate their abilities.
- Assume the person understands, unless they tell you otherwise.
- Ask what you can do to effectively communicate.
- Be patient, it may take longer for a person to communicate.
- Respectfully asking for clarity if you do not understand what is being communicated.
- Use everyday language and speak clearly.
- Ask if the person needs assistance with reading information, completing forms, taking notes or for signing documents.
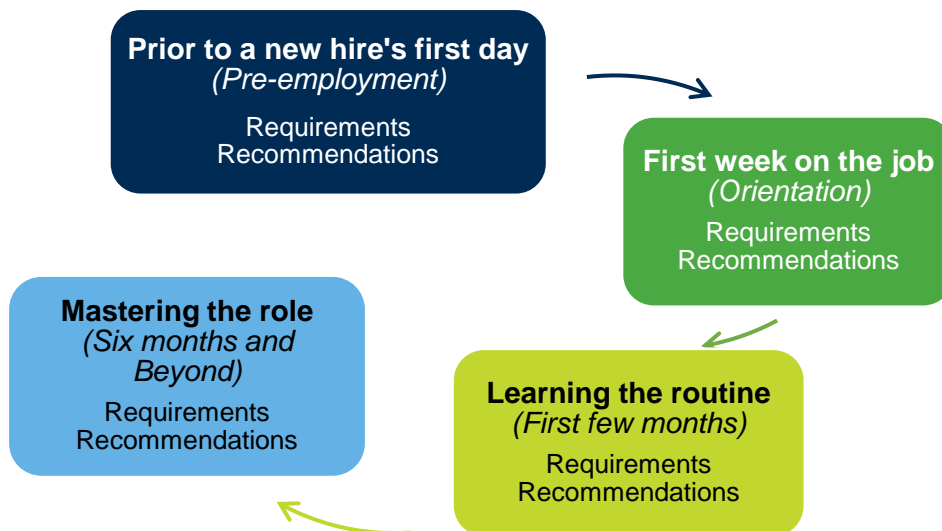- Looking for more information visit: communication-access.org or call your Human Resources Business Partner.

> "Successfully integrating persons with disabilities into the workforce and the result can be seen in a more diverse talent pool, leading to more creativity and better problem solving; improved business outcomes; talented, committed employees; and, an inclusive and diverse workplace culture."
>
> - Alberta Employment First Strategy

ORIENTATION & WORKPLACE PREPARATION

New Employee Orientation Process

Prior to a new hire's first day
(Pre-employment)

Requirements
Recommendations

First week on the job
(Orientation)

Requirements
Recommendations

Mastering the role
(Six months and Beyond)

Requirements
Recommendations

Learning the routine
(First few months)

Requirements
Recommendations

Orientation

In many respects, introducing a person with a disability into the organization is not different than introducing a new employee. The focus is on the person's abilities rather than disabilities.

Like any new employee, a person with a disability needs to meet his or her colleagues, view the work location, and understand what is expected of them on the job. The key for hiring managers is to be aware of and remain open to the possibility that a new employee with a disability may have specific questions or concerns that come up during orientation, that may not come up when you are providing an orientation to someone without a disability.

There is greater certainty of achieving a positive first experience if you have followed the steps set out in 'Getting Started' and the Inclusive Hiring Lens.

Positive First Experiences

It is important to manage the introduction of persons with disabilities in such a way that the first experience is positive for everyone. To ensure a successful placement, and to help those who have little exposure to persons with disabilities overcome fears and concerns, take time to have conversations with the team ahead of time. It is also important not to share confidential information about the person. Provide the team with an overview of the role, the abilities the person brings to the team, and how we can support the person to be successful in their role.

Safety

A comprehensive Health and Safety Orientation is part of every new employee's onboarding. This includes reviewing related directives and completing the employee safety orientation checklist available on The Vine – HR Library, within the first week of the employee starting.

Ensure the employee is made aware of related hazard assessments, MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets), and other related forms.

Another key element of the safety orientation is the Emergency Evacuation procedure for your area. It is important to ask if the employee will need assistance in an emergency.

Think of what information may be helpful for the employee to stay safe. Sometimes figuring out what help may be needed is easy.

Examples include:

- People with hearing loss may need someone to alert them during audible alarms or announcements.
- Individuals with vision loss may need help with written instructions or finding escape routes and avoiding objects. They may need more time to evacuate.
- Someone with a mobility disability, such as a broken leg or permanent paralysis, may need help leaving the workplace, using stairs or opening doors.

Other times it may be more difficult:

- Someone with asthma may need help walking long distances or with stairs, especially if there is smoke, dust, fumes or chemicals in the air.

- A person with a speech disability may need different ways to communicate in an emergency.
- A person with a mental health disability may have trouble dealing with high anxiety, panic or stress in an emergency.

As required, ensure that information is provided in a format that is accessible and understood by the employee.

Accommodations

Workplace accommodation means ensuring that facilities and products are accessible to prospective and current employees.   Accommodation encompasses any modification or support that allows a person to do his or her job. This includes altering architectural features of the building, adapting a work process, and providing tools that an employee will use during their daily work.

Costs of workplace accommodations are often cited as a barrier to hiring persons with disabilities. Workplace accommodations are usually a combination of flexibility of hours, job requirements, and possibly assistive technology.

Sample Accommodations and Costs

- Changing a desk layout from the right to the left side for a data-entry operator who has a shoulder injury ($0).
- Supplying a telephone amplifier for a computer programmer who is hard of hearing ($70).
- Providing an articulating keyboard tray to alleviate the strain of repetitive motion and carpal tunnel syndrome ($150).
- Providing a specialized chair for an office employee to alleviate pain caused by back injury ($400).
- Providing a drafting table, page turner and pressure sensitive tape recorder for a sales agent with paralysis ($1,100).

Communicate with the Employee

When it comes to workplace accommodations, the best person to talk to is the person with a disability. They are usually aware of their strengths and limitations. Often solutions can be arrived at through discussion. Solutions such as modifying duties or work conditions are sometimes all that is needed to eliminate barriers so that the person with a disability can perform their job.

Work routines and requirements change. Any change can result in new barriers or emerging challenges – however if there is open communication, new challenges can be raised and dealt with simply and efficiently. Contact your Human Resources Business Partner for additional support.

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Persons with disabilities are like other employees; they want to do a good job, benefit from constructive supervision, enjoy new challenges and get ahead. One way for employers to retain employees is to establish career development plans for all employees, including those with disabilities, and follow through on these plans.

Career Planning

Persons with disabilities have aspirations and career goals. Supervisors should discuss career expectations with each employee, and evaluate the employee's interests, talents, and skills in relation to the requirements of available jobs. If an employee's career goals seem unachievable, the supervisor should provide constructive feedback and try to reach an agreement on appropriate goals and paths to achieving them. The supervisor should not assume an employee's disability will be a barrier.

Skills Training

To foster the development of employees, supervisors should discuss the training and development desires with each employee. Ensure that employees complete an individual learning plan each year.

Effective Performance Management

Supervisors must treat employees with disabilities the same as all other employees. If a position has been restructured to accommodate a person's disability, evaluate the employee only on those tasks he or she is expected to perform, but apply the same performance standards to employees with disabilities that are applied to all employees. All employees need regular, on-going constructive feedback and support as part of effective performance management.

Networking and Social Interaction

Supervisors should include employees with disabilities in both formal work groups and employee gatherings. Persons with disabilities enjoy the same types of social and recreational activities as employees without disabilities. All employees should be given the opportunity to participate. If required, arrange for accessible facilities to accommodate staff with disabilities.

Mentoring and Natural Supports

All staff can benefit from the guidance of more experienced employees. Supervisors should encourage employees to find mentors or a supportive team member to help orientate and provide ongoing support as required.

SUPPORT AND RETENTION

As with all employees, you have to put effort into supporting employees throughout their time working with the City. There are several retention activities you can use to keep employees as part of valued workforce.

Tips for Retention:

- **Respect:** Create a work environment where employees feel valued, respected, included and appreciated.
- **Engage:** Involve employees in decisions that affect their jobs and the future of the organization. Provide employees the opportunity to contribute their unique talents and abilities.
- **Balance:** Provide the flexibility in work operations and daily management that employees need to achieve a healthy work life balance.
- **Listen:** Encourage employees to share their ideas, suggestions, feedback and concerns. Show that you are prepared to listen and take action.
- **Communicate:** Explain corporate goals and objectives. Let employees know what their responsibilities are, how they can contribute and what is expected of them.
- **Train:** Give employees the learning and development opportunities to reach their full potential. Promote career development.
- **Challenge:** Encourage employees to push their limits, take on new responsibilities and grow their knowledge and skill.
- **Appreciate:** There is tremendous motivational power in the simple act of appreciation. Sincerely recognize and value the efforts of your employees and they will respond with loyalty, dedication and hard work.
- **Reward:** Meaningful rewards improve job satisfaction and boost morale. Rewards can be monetary or non-monetary, ranging from professional development opportunities to a celebratory lunch or public thank you.

- **Celebrate:** Take time to acknowledge, praise and celebrate individual, professional and corporate success.

Employment Agency Support

Effective recruitment and retention practices include partnerships with community based employment agencies. Agencies will be available for support following a placement, to support you, the employee with a disability and other employees as required.

Monitoring Results

With a commitment to develop a more inclusive workplace, and specifically to recruit and retain persons with disabilities, part of that commitment must be to monitor and evaluate the organization's progress. As a hiring manager, you need to know that the commitment of the City to be an inclusive employer goes beyond the Human Resources department and into all departments.

The measures to track our progress may include:

- Perceptions and attitudes: measured by employee surveys or focus groups;
- Improved accessibility: measured by conducting an accessibility audit and monitoring efforts to eliminate barriers;
- Access to job candidates: measured by tracking and assessing returns on outreach activities.
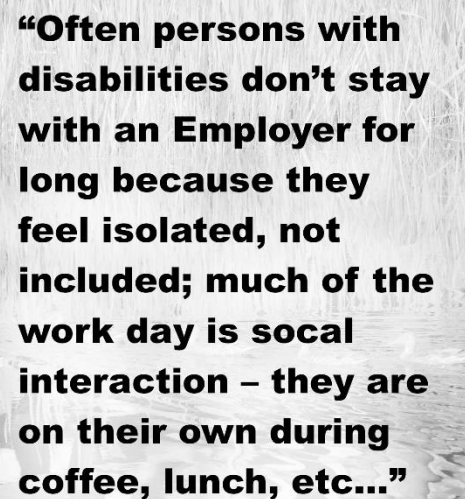
WHAT TO DO IF AN EMPLOYEE BECOMES DISABLED

One of the keys to success is identifying the disability as early as possible. In some cases, identification may be straightforward. In others, such as progressive mental illness, it may not be clear that a disability is developing. The City has a Disability Management Program to assist in the event this situation arises. This allows for early intervention, which is key to successful outcomes.

The supervisor has a key role in disability management process. Establishing a foundation of trust and encouraging a cooperative approach is critical to the establishing modified work alternatives and the return to work process. Contact Human Resources for further assistance.

Additional Resources

City Manager Directives:

- 2.03 – Respectful Workplace
- 2.04 – Code of Conduct
- 3.06 – Employee Recognition
- 3.08 – Hours of Work
- 5.04 – Inclusive Hiring
- 6.01 – Training & Development
- 8.06 – Performance Planning & Review
- Part 10 – Disability Management

"**Often persons with disabilities don't stay with an Employer for long because they feel isolated, not included; much of the work day is socal interaction – they are on their own during coffee, lunch, etc...**"

- Person with a disability

CULTIVATING ABILITIES
HIRING MANAGER HANDBOOK

stalbert.ca