



# Specifically Sourcing Candidates with Disabilities – A Resource Guide

*Reach as many people with disabilities,  
as possible, when recruiting.*

It isn't always clear how to ensure that people with disabilities are included in your recruiting. But you want to be sure of one thing: you are finding people who can do the job!



Deb Russell INC  
Bridging the Gap Between Disability and Business

© 2019 Deb Russell Inc.



This guide is designed to inform about disability-specific sources in the U.S. and includes some pros and cons based on the experiences of over 100 companies trying to do the same thing.

### **National•**

Disability Employment-Focused Organizations•  
Disability-Specific Job Boards •  
US Governmental Agencies•

### **Local •**

Chapters of Disability Services Organizations•  
Community-based Disability Employment Services Providers•  
Disability Focused Employment Events•  
High Schools•  
U.S. Government••

### **Non Disability-specific Sourcing •**

Employment Services Providers (inclusive of people with disabilities like Goodwill, America's Job Centers, Salvation Army, JVS, Catholic Charities, etc.)•  
Friends and Families•  
Job Boards•  
Post-Secondary Education•  
Professional Associations•  
Staffing Companies (AKA Outsourced Recruiting)



## **Do we need to do anything special?**

No, you probably are already capturing some candidates who have disabilities (3/4ths of disabilities are not apparent).

But if you were satisfied with your current candidate pool, you wouldn't be looking at this eBook. So, perhaps people with disabilities are worth considering.

## **Aren't Current Sourcing Strategies Adequate?**

Most recruiters (and executive, leaders, co-workers, etc.) say "Why aren't candidates with disabilities accessed through current systems?" • And it's possible that you're already capturing as many candidates as possible.

• However, our experience is that many of them are not using mainstream job-seeker resources because they believe that hiring companies will immediately disregard them because of their disability.

So, why not try some of these strategies and see if you get a deeper pool of candidates?



# Disability Employment-Focused Organizations

What: National Disability Employment-focused Organizations are membership associations that focus on the national picture as it relates to the employment of people with disabilities. Through membership, companies have the opportunity to join programs that offer exposure to some candidates with disabilities.

## National Disability Employment Sources

Pros: These organizations are disability “generic” (do not specialize on one type of disability), usually connected to some disability services organizations.

Cons: Fairly high membership fee structures, often have high priority on changing national policies, and don’t directly provide services to people with disabilities.

Examples include: • National Organization on Disability (NOD), • Disability IN: (formerly known as the USBLN), • Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD) • Careers and the Disabled Magazine

# Disability Specific Job Boards

What: These services are designed specifically to connect job seekers with disabilities to employers specifically interested in hiring people with disabilities. I have no experience with their success. However these companies continue to stay in business, so they must be successful.

## National Disability Employment Sources

Pros: A wider range of skill and experience is likely to be found in the candidate pool and they can go out and seek candidates on your behalf.

Cons: Almost none can verify that the candidate is a person with a disability. They typically cost the same, or more, as other placement firms.

Examples include: • GettingHired • DisabledPerson • DisabilityJobs.net • RecruitDisability • AbilityJobs • Disability Job Exchange

# U.S. Governmental Agencies

What: The US Government has a significant interest in the employment of people with disabilities. They fund a great program called EARN, which offers a resume database of students with disabilities. This service was originally intended just for federal agencies, but it is now open to a wider audience.

## National Disability Employment Sources

Pros: A pool of candidates with disabilities

Cons: Limited individualized recruiting support

Examples include: • Vocational Rehabilitation • Developmental Disabilities Services • Veterans Services

# Chapters/Affiliates of Disability

## Services Organizations

What: Community-based Organizations that provide employment (and possibly other) services to people with disabilities.

Examples include: •The ARC • Epilepsy Foundation • United Cerebral Palsy • Easter Seals

## Local Disability Employment Sources

Pros: Typically, access to the candidates with disabilities is free and these organizations may provide services to businesses like special training/coaching services to get the candidate onboard.

Cons: More than 90% are not professional employment services agencies and therefore quality can be a significant concern. Almost all are non-profits and will solicit donations. Primarily publicly funded and can be immersed in bureaucratic red-tape.

# Community-based Disability Employment Service Providers

What: Community-Based Organizations that provide employment services to people with disabilities.

To find agencies, use an internet search engine using the community name and the words "employment" and "disabilities"

## Local Disability Employment Sources

Pros: Typically, access to the candidates with disabilities is free and these organizations may provide services to businesses like special training/coaching services to get the candidate onboard.

Cons: More than 90% are not professional employment services agencies and therefore quality can be a significant concern. Primarily publicly funded and immersed in bureaucratic red-tape.



# Disability -Focused Employment Events

What: Events that offer a chance for businesses (who are hiring) to interact with candidates. Sometimes these events are fairly structured to ensure better match between candidate skill sets and desired skills and experiences. Typically, these are called "job fairs".

## National Disability Employment Sources

Pros: Opportunity to meet a variety of job seekers.

Cons: If event is unstructured, there may be no candidates interested or qualified for your jobs. Generally, these are not free.

Examples include: • Disability IN: Affiliates • Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD) • Careers and the Disabled Magazine



## High School Special Education

**Programs**  
What: All public schools are required to help special education students find internships or other work experiences in their last year of school.

Pros: I've worked with multiple clients that have used this approach to establish a continual pipeline of talent with disabilities, taking one per semester. Most interns stay after graduation and become full time associates.

Cons: Most schools use teachers to run this program and therefore bandwidth to support the student intern (and business) can be a significant concern and can be immersed in bureaucratic red-tape.

# Local Disability Employment Sources

## Post Secondary Education

Every Post-Secondary Educational Institution is required to have dedicated personnel to provide services to students with disabilities. Some times career services will coordinate with disabled student services to ensure campus recruiting includes students with disabilities, when requested by companies.



## **Friends and Family Referrals**

- Statistics show that 30% of families have at least one member with a disability. When clients have reached out specifically, they have yielded 3-10 candidates.

Cons: •Each time a client that has made a point to communicate (to their existing workforce) that they are interested in employing people with disabilities and encourage employees to refer family members with disabilities, it has yielded 3-10 referrals.

- Likewise, in some areas, churches and other religious and/or community centers can be a good place to hang a posting specifically mentioning people with disabilities.

# **Mainstream (Non Disability-specific) Sources**

## **Employment Service Providers**

What: Similar to community based and local chapters, however, these organizations are not disability specific, but are inclusive of people with disabilities (e.g. Goodwill, America's Job Centers, Salvation Army, JVS, Catholic Charities, etc.). These programs provide services assisting with people preparing and applying for employment.



## **Job Boards**

What: Mainstream job posting services – (Examples include: Indeed, Monster) – my clients have had no luck using this method by simply mentioning their interest in employing people with disabilities, but if you're using them anyway, it doesn't hurt to add the language in the posting.

## **Professional Associations**

What: Some professional associations have chapters specific for members with disabilities. If you are recruiting through this avenue, be sure to ask about these chapters

# **Mainstream (Non Disability-specific) Sources**

## **Staffing Services (AKA Outsourced Recruiting)**

You can contractually require diverse slates for all candidates presented.

Some entities partner with local disability service providers to meet their customers' requests for disability inclusive candidates.



This eBook includes common types of resources, and experiences my clients have had with them. It's not intended to be a rating of specific entities.

# **DRI eBook on Recruiting Sources**

I discourage you from agreeing to working with any source exclusively. There is no benefit to exclusivity. Through experience you can determine whom to winnow out of your funnel.

Need more help with sourcing strategies for disability inclusive workforces? Let us know! [deb@debrussellinc.com](mailto:deb@debrussellinc.com)