Resources for Supporting Apprentices with Disabilities

Universal Resources

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD; https://www.aapd.com/) is a convener, connector, and catalyst for change, increasing the political and economic power of people with disabilities. As a national cross-disability rights organization, AAPD advocates for full civil rights for Americans with disabilities by promoting equal opportunity, economic power, independent living, and political participation.

Centers for Independent Living (CILs or ILCs) operate locally in every state and territory in the U.S. They are consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential, private nonprofit agencies that provide IL services. At a minimum, centers provide:

- Information and referral;
- IL skills training;
- Peer counseling;
- Individual and systems advocacy; and
- Services that facilitate transition from nursing homes and other institutions to the community, provide assistance to those at risk of entering institutions, and facilitate transition of youth to postsecondary life.

Centers also may provide, among other services: psychological counseling, assistance in securing housing or shelter, personal assistance services, transportation referral and assistance, physical therapy, mobility training, rehabilitation technology, recreation, and other services necessary to improve the ability of individuals with significant disabilities to function independently in the family or community and/or to continue in employment.

The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR; https://www.csavr.org/) is composed of the chief administrators of the public rehabilitation agencies serving individuals with physical and mental disabilities in the States, District of Columbia, and the territories.

- **State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies**. (https://www.csavr.org/stateagencydirectory) Each state and territory in the U.S. operates a vocational rehabilitation (VR agency, as well as a service agency for the blind which may be independent or housed within the VR department. These agencies offer

counseling, supportive services, and resources to both individuals and employers, with the stated goal of helping individuals with disabilities find and retain employment.

Disability:IN (https://disabilityin.org/) empowers business to achieve disability inclusion and equality. It administers the annual Disability Equality Index (DEI), a free benchmarking tool that provides employers a confidential opportunity to receive an objective score on disability inclusion policies and practices. The organization is comprised of more than 130 corporate partners spanning the technology, healthcare, financial, transportation, entertainment, and retail industries.

The Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN; https://askearn.org/) is a resource that helps employers tap the benefits of disability diversity by educating public- and private-sector organizations on ways to build inclusive workplace cultures. EARN offers information and resources to empower individuals and organizations to become leaders in the employment and advancement of people with disabilities.

- EARN's Primer on Disability Inclusion provides an overview of disability-inclusive workplace practices. This resource is a starting point on the topic with links and information related to culture, recruitment, retention, accommodations, communication and more.

- EARN's Workplace Mentoring Playbook offers strategies, tools and activities for employers and employees interested in establishing mentoring relationships. It is based on the premise that workplace mentoring is an effective strategy for increasing the retention, job performance and career advancement of any employee, but is especially critical in supporting the inclusion of employees with disabilities.

- Tips for Mentoring Student Interns with Disabilities. While targeted toward internships rather than apprenticeships, this resource offers applicable recommendations for developing and fostering a mentoring relationship with mentees.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC; https://www.eeoc.gov/) is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, transgender status, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.

- Applying Performance and Conduct Standards to Employees with Disabilities. This document provides information on the ADA and the responsibilities of both employers and employees when performance and conduct issues arise.

- [Questions and Answers about Health Care Workers and the ADA.](#) This 2007 guidance provides an overview of employing individuals with disabilities in healthcare occupations, and offers numerous examples related to determining employee disability status, when a healthcare worker can be considered "qualified" to perform a job, and appropriate accommodation solutions. (NOTE: the definition of disability was updated after this guidance was issued.)

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN; https://askjan.org/) is the leading source of free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. Working toward practical solutions that benefit both employer and employee, JAN helps people with disabilities enhance their employability, and shows employers how to capitalize on the value and talent that people with disabilities add to the workplace. What follows is a small sample of articles, guidance, and information that are particularly relevant to mentors and apprenticeship program support staff targeting the healthcare sector. These come from [JAN's full library of similar resources](#).

- [Accommodation and Compliance Series: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).](#) This resource provides compliance and safety-related guidance specifically pertaining to COVID-19.

- [Affirmative Action and Disability: What Can Employers Ask?](#) This article concisely describes how employers may request applicants voluntarily disclose a disability for affirmative action purposes.

- [Dealing with Illegal Drug Use Disclosures](#). This article discusses how employers can address issues related to illegal drug use and their obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- [Effective Accommodation Practice Series: Real-Time Communication Etiquette for Communicating with Customers with Disabilities](#). These are communication tips for communicating effectively, organized by type of disability. A useful reference guide whether meeting face-to-face or virtually.

- [Occupation and Industry Series: Accommodating Nurses with Disabilities.](#) This resource provides an overview of when nurses with disabilities need to disclose a disability, suggestions for accommodations based on disabilities present, and related resources that apply to professionals in healthcare occupations.

- [Requesting Accommodations for Employment Testing](#). This article shares regulations about accommodating employment testing and offers suggestions for accommodating employees with a variety of disabilities.

The National Organization on Disability (NOD; https://www.nod.org/) focuses on increasing employment opportunities for the approximately 80-percent of working-age Americans with disabilities who are not employed. NOD works with leading employers and partners with educational and philanthropic institutions to pilot innovative approaches to disability inclusion, then scales these up into initiatives with even broader impact.

The National Disability Mentoring Coalition. (NDMC; https://ndmc.pyd.org/) is an initiative of [Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD)](#) that offers information, resources and support for mentoring programs serving individuals with disabilities. NDMC, along with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, developed a [Disability Mentoring Toolkit](#) which provides an overview of a variety of mentoring models and programs focused on serving youth and adults with disabilities.

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN; https://www.ndrn.org/) works in Washington, DC on behalf of the Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&As) and Client Assistance Programs (CAPs), the nation's largest providers of legal advocacy services for people with disabilities. NDRN promotes the network's capacity, ensures that P&As/CAPs remain strong and effective by providing training and technical assistance, and advocates for laws protecting the civil and human rights of all people with disabilities.

The Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT; https://peatworks.org/) promotes the employment, retention, and career advancement of people with disabilities through the development, adoption, and promotion of accessible technology.

RespectAbility (https://www.respectability.org/) is a nonprofit organization that works collaboratively with employers, entertainment leaders, governors, policy makers, educators, self-advocates, non-profits, faith-based organizations, philanthropists and the media to fight stigmas and advance opportunities.

Visual Impairment/Blindness

- **The American Council of the Blind** (ACB; https://www.acb.org/) is comprised of approximately 70 state chapters and special-interest affiliates representing a diverse range of groups within the blind community, including students, families, teachers,

attorneys, governmental employees, entrepreneurs, vending stand operators and the LGBTQ community.

- **The National Federation of the Blind** (NFB; https://nfb.org) coordinates programs, services, and resources that support blind and visually impaired children and adults.

- Magnification, screen reading, braille, and optical character recognition software (OCR). This article includes information and linked resources regarding particular types of technology that blind or visually impaired individuals may use in a workplace.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

- **The American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association** (ADARA; https://www.adara.org/) is a national organization that brings together professionals from vocational rehabilitation, mental health, chemical health, education, interpreting, and related fields to share best practices in working with individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind to address policy and program concerns, and to network.

- **The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association** (ASHA; https://www.asha.org/) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students.

- **The National Association of the Deaf** (NAD; https://www.nad.org/) is the nation's premier civil rights organization of, by and for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the United States.

- Hearing Aid Funding Sources. A list of agencies and organizations that offer hearing aid assistance through donation and funding programs for qualified recipients.

Mobility Impairments

- Healthcare Workers with Motor Impairments. This article discusses a variety of mobility impairments and examples of how healthcare workers with such impairments can be accommodated on the job, including videos demonstrating CPR with prostheses, and nurses working successfully in healthcare settings. The article is the first of a 2-part series.

Cognitive Impairments and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

- **The Learning Disabilities Association** of America (LDA; https://ldaamerica.org/) provides support to people with learning disabilities, their parents, teachers, and other professionals.

- **The Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder** (CHADD; https://chadd.org) provides support and education for educators, professionals and affiliate chapters located across the country.

- The Autism@Work Playbook presents collective learnings, approaches, and insights related to hiring initiatives targeting individuals with ASD.

- Interviewing Tips for Applicants with ASD. This article is designed to assist job applicants with ASD best represent themselves, and help employers understand the kinds of accommodations that can be made during the job interview process.

Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

- **The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities** (AAIDD; https://www.aaidd.org/) promotes progressive policies, sound research, effective practices, and universal human rights for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

- **The Arc** (https://thearc.org/) is the largest national community-based organization advocating for and with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and serving them and their families.

- **The Association of University Centers on Disabilities** (AUCD; https://www.aucd.org/) is a membership organization that supports and promotes a national network of university-based interdisciplinary programs. Through its members, AUCD is a resource for local, state, national, and international agencies, organizations, and policy makers engaged in a range of interdisciplinary activities including academic training; basic and applied research; training and TA to schools, communities and government; policy advocacy; program evaluation; and dissemination of best practices and new information.

- JAN's tip sheet for Communicating and Working with Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities offers a handful of suggestions useful for mentors, employers, peers, and others.

Mental Health Impairments

- **The National Institute of Mental Health** under NIH (https://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml) is the lead federal agency on mental disorders, with extensive information and resources about numerous mental and cognitive health topics, including anxiety disorders, ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, Depression, Eating Disorders, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, PTSD, Schizophrenia, and Suicide Prevention.

- **The National Alliance on Mental Illness** (NAMI; https://www.nami.org/Home) is an alliance of more than 600 local affiliates providing advocacy, support and education for Americans affected by mental illness.

- EARN's Mental Health Toolkit provides resources and tools that help to cultivate a welcoming and supportive work environment for employees who may be facing mental health issues.

- JAN's overview on mental health impairments includes definitions, resources, and recommendations for types of accommodations.

Respiratory Impairments

- Scents and Sensitivity in the Workplace. This article discusses often overlooked challenges related to asthma, allergies, and other respiratory disorders, and offers accommodation suggestions that employers can consider.