



Office of Equal
Employment Opportunity
Government of Western Australia

Western Australian Public Sector

Employing people with disabilities



Showing the way!

O E E O

Diversity in the Public Sector

For the purposes of workforce planning, the definition of people with a disability refers to people with a moderate core activity restriction aged between 16 and 64 years.

% of Workforce	2002	2007	6-year change
People with disabilities	1.3%	1.5%	+0.2%

Over the last six years, the number of employees with disabilities has improved marginally from 1.3% to 1.5%. The sector is below the Government's objective of 3.6% for 2007 and more needs to be done to improve the participation rate for people with disabilities.

Steps to follow to employ people with disabilities

Step 1: Prepare a specific action plan for employing people with disabilities.

Identify a small number of highly targeted and specific actions and prepare a submission for Corporate Executive on employing people with disabilities. This can be done using the Guides and Resources on the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (OEEO) website 'Accessing Abilities' - Recruiting and Retaining People with Disabilities in WA
www.oeeo.wa.gov.au/publications/guides/accessingabilities.htm

You can download a flash presentation that promotes 'Accessing abilities in the workplace' which can be used in your agency www.oeeo.wa.gov.au/documents/eguidev1_00/oeeo.html

What should be included in your action plan?

- Achievable targets that take account of objectives described in the *Equity and Diversity Plan for the Public Sector Workforce 2006-2009*
- Examples of the business benefits that can be realised through improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities
- Specific, measurable actions that are realistic and can be achieved in a reasonable time period

Approaches that work

- Design recruitment processes that eliminate barriers for people with disabilities
- Adopt a policy whereby candidates for entry-level positions are routinely sourced through the People with Disabilities Entry Level Program run by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Work with a Disability Employment Network (DEN) provider to identify roles in your organisation that would be suitable for people with a disability. Then create opportunities for people with disabilities to gain experience or direct employment in those roles
- Identify simple administrative, records management or building maintenance tasks that could be undertaken by a supported work team and work with a DEN provider to establish such a team

Some reported benefits¹

- When compared to people without a disability, people with disabilities
 - Are more reliable and stay with an employer longer
 - Take less sick leave and have less occupational health and safety incidents
 - Have the same or better attendance and punctuality
 - Can influence a positive cultural change and better organisational performance

Step 2: Partner with a Disability Employment Network (DEN) provider

DEN providers can assist across the full range of disability employment improvement strategies. Currently, services provided by DENs can be accessed outside of the Common Use Contract for Human Resource Management Services where they are involved in supporting equity and diversity improvement strategies. Many of the services provided by DENs are free and of very high quality.

The role of the DEN provider is to make sure the work is done to the satisfaction of the employer. DEN providers can:

- Assist in job matching
- Run co-worker and disability awareness training
- Help ensure a diverse pool of applicants
- Facilitate access to relevant assistance schemes

Contact the OEEO for information on DEN providers or visit the ACE National Network website at www.acenational.org.au/.

Step 3: Advertise to include diversity group applicants

- Review the job description to ensure that you attract a diverse application pool
- Be willing to tailor a job description to meet the capabilities of people with disabilities
- Advertise the vacancy in publications that will attract a range of candidates
- Use the following text when advertising a position:
 - We are seeking to increase the diversity of our workforce to better meet the differing needs of our customers and to improve equal opportunity for our employees. People with disabilities are encouraged to apply.*
- Prepare information packs for applicants that include the agency's equity and diversity policies, flexible work options, career opportunities and details on how to apply for the position
- Develop flexible application processes
- Include selection panel members that support equity and diversity objectives
- Have an assessment process that accommodates equity and diversity criteria

¹ Graffam, J. et al, (2000). Making it Work: Employer Outcomes when Employing a PWD, Institute of Disability Studies, Deakin University.

Step 4: Incorporate on the job support and training

A DEN provider assists with on the job support and training. Many people with disabilities work independently and without support. Where this is not the case, the DEN provider will match the needs of the employer with the skill set of the employee through:

- Work trials to test the suitability of the work for people with disabilities
- Co-workers who are paid a wage subsidy if they assist people with disabilities
- On-site Support Workers who supervise people with disabilities
- Career development assessments to identify support or training requirements

Step 5: Explore the range of available wage subsidies

A DEN provider can arrange subsidy payments. Government subsidy schemes include:

- Workplace Modification Scheme—funding for the cost of special equipment or adjustment to accommodate an employee with a disability
- Australian Apprentices Access Program—provides financial incentives to apprentices with disabilities and their employers
- Supported Wage System—a pro-rata wage based on the assessed level of productivity of the employee

Additional information on wage subsidies are available on the JobAccess website at www.jobaccess.gov.au/JOAC/Services.

Employment providers can have their own schemes such as providing additional wage subsidies or co-worker payments.

Employers can also use the Supported Work Experience into Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SWEAT) Project. This is funded by EDGE Employment Solutions and provides work experience for students with disabilities.

Government can show the way in employing people with disabilities and the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity can help you do it

For more details on employing people with disabilities, visit the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity website at www.oeeo.wa.gov.au/publications/guides/pwd.htm or the Disability Services Commission *Open Your Mind. Count Us In* campaign at www.countusin.com.au.

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