

# RECRUITING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES©



## Where to Look

There is no “One-Stop-Shop” or single national entity to use to reach people with disabilities who may be a good fit for the skills and experience your company is seeking. Deb Russell Inc. can help you find them.

# Recruiting People with Disabilities©

## WHERE TO LOOK

Recruiters are very aware that they should always offer a fully diverse slate of candidates to hiring managers, but are unclear on how to ensure that people with disabilities are in the group. Three distinct characteristics are sought in the candidate: the skills/experience required of the position; a disability; AND someone who will identify themselves as a person with a disability in your ATS (or other devices used to gauge diversity). But there is no “One Stop Shop” or single national entity to use.

## Here is a quick review of the most common used resources

### Government Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

If you search on the Internet for keywords “recruitment” and “disability” you will get the same resources mentioned in almost every hit (DOL ODEP, EARN, JAN, Voc Rehab, Veterans Association, America’s Job Centers programs for people with disabilities, special education programs). The federal government has a big investment in trying to assist people with disabilities (who are eligible for services based on their disability). These resources may focus on a particular subset of the disability population (students, veterans, people with cognitive impairments, etc). And in almost all cases, these resources are free! The challenge is that the design for the funding of these entities is to serve the person with a disability. In almost all cases, these organizations provide services beyond simply connecting the person with a disability to a great job opportunity. And this creates a conflict of priorities. Most of these agencies are limited in their scope of services to ensure that the client is the person with a disability and therefore, when you are recruiting for a particular skill set in a particular location, you will only be served if they happen to have a match skill set in their case load. These are great services to be connected with because they are free.

Pro: All of their referrals are people who have a disability

Con: In most cases unless you only recruit entry level-generic skill sets, you will find frustration if this is the only “disability recruiting tool” you use.

### Private Recruiting Services– aka Sourcing Services

There are a few sourcing entities that are marketed specifically for those seeking candidates with disabilities. These are professional organizations that, typically, have business lines in several different aspects of sourcing and recruiting. The caliber of skill sets and experience of the candidates sourced here are higher and they can go out and seek the skills you required.

Pro: 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.

Con: Almost none can verify that the candidate is a person with a disability. They can ask and be very straightforward with candidates that they are used specifically for recruiting people with disabilities. They typically cost the same as other placement firms.

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## Associations with Disability-Focused Chapters

There are a few professional organizations that have chapters for their members who have disabilities – Nurses with Disabilities, Chemists with Disabilities, ABA Disability Chapter, and USOC/Paralympians- just to name a few. If you are recruiting in a specific industry that has professional associations, it is well worth your time to research whether they have a chapter specific to members with disabilities.

Pro: a very specific way to outreach to people with disabilities

Con: Only a small number of professional organizations have such chapters.

## Campus Recruiting for Students with Disabilities

Every university and college in the US has an office for services for students with disabilities. This office is charged with ensuring that the students who have disabilities have equal access to their education as all other students do. Leveraging the staff in these offices can be challenging because their primary charge is ensuring the students get services, but more and more are starting to coordinate with career services especially when a company requests this. The coordination can be in joint events, specific mailing lists, ensuring accommodations during career fairs and other mass recruiting events, etc.

Pro: students reached through this office will be people with disabilities and will represent a diverse academic background

Con: Student services offices are typically under resourced and their primary goal (like government funded agencies) is to ensure students get the accommodations needed for their academic work.

## Disability Employment Focused Organizations/Events

*(e.g. USBLN and Affiliate BLNs, CAREERS and the disABLED Career Fairs and other disability focused career events)*

The United States Business Leadership Network, and their local affiliates are focused on connecting businesses that want to increase disability inclusion. The USBLN has traditionally stayed away from identifying as an opportunity for businesses to find good candidates, however lately that has changed. People who have disabilities are looking for a new job know that the USBLN Annual Conference and Affiliate events are ripe opportunities to connect with companies. USBLN's Rising Leaders program and Academy are excellent opportunities but have only capacity for a select number of candidates. Disability specific career fairs (not associated with governmental agencies and NGOs) are small and local but excellent sources for candidates, albeit typically entry level.

Pros: Events focused on people with disabilities obtaining employment almost guarantees that all candidates have disabilities and tends to draw a higher level of skill sets and experience.

Cons: Most of these have costs, the candidate pool can be small and since there is rarely a focus on industry, there may or may not be matches for the skills you seek.

**Remember, there is no “One Stop Shop” or single national entity...  
So, HOW can recruiters find candidates, with disabilities, who  
will self-identify AND have the skills and experience open  
positions require?**

**The question is not how to find them; the question is how to get  
the ones already being recruited to self-identify**

**Because...**

Statistics show that

- 19% of the US has a population,
- Of those 56M people, less than 20% are associated with entities that provide services to people with disabilities, and
- 75% percent of disabilities cannot be detected by just looking at a person;

The odds are in your favor that a good percentage of the people you are currently recruiting through other means have disabilities! **Therefore, maybe a better question to ask is how to get them to self-identify in your employee tracking systems.**

**Summary of Key Facets of Resources for Recruiting Candidates with Disabilities**

Source	Cost?	Likelihood that candidates are people with disabilities	Likelihood that candidates will Self-ID as having a disability	Likelihood that candidates will be a good match for skill set and experience requirements
Government Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	\$0	100%	Probably	Hit or Miss, low chance if higher skill set or experience required
Private Recruiting Services (all that I know charge for this service) – AKA RPOs	YES	Maybe	Maybe	Probably
Industry Associations with Disability-Focused Chapters	Unknown	High	High	High, if industry matches open positions
Campus Recruiting for Students with Disabilities	\$0	100%	High	Good
Disability Employment Focused Organizations/ Events	Variable	Close to 100%	High	Unknown