

Maryland Disability Employment Month

Employer Hiring Tips 2026

Maximize your talent pool with an inclusive workforce.

1. Gain a competitive edge with broader talent pool

People with disabilities are one of the state's largest, most underutilized talent pools. Employers who embrace inclusion report broader talent pipelines, higher worker engagement and retention, more innovation, and stronger customer relationships. These are critical workforce assets as business needs and workplaces evolve. Plus, the pool of disabled Americans actively seeking employment is growing as new Medicaid work requirements take effect in January 2027. *Visit the Employer Assistance and Resource Network at askearn.org.*

2. Find candidates to meet your specific business needs

Jobseekers with disabilities span every education and skill level, from recent graduates to PhDs and former senior federal employees. Not every disability is visible, and most require no accommodation at all. For candidates with significant disabilities, qualified job developers can design customized roles that match your specific business needs, often paired with short-term job coach support. *Work with Maryland's American Job Centers at labor.maryland.gov/county to reach candidates.*

3. Save money with tax credits

The Maryland Disability Employment Tax Credit gives Maryland businesses a state tax incentive for hiring qualified workers with disabilities, directly lowering the cost of building a more inclusive team. The Federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit is a tax incentive for employers who hire individuals from groups that face significant barriers to employment, including those with disabilities. *Learn about tax credits at labor.maryland.gov/employment/taxcreditintroduction.shtml.*

4. Use free services to connect with talent

The Maryland Department of Disabilities offers free help to connect employers to job-ready talent and Maryland's Division of Rehabilitation Services matches open roles to registered jobseekers. More than 30 American Job Centers located in communities across Maryland work to connect employers with jobseekers that match the needed skills and abilities to fill open positions. National boards like AbilityJOBS and the Autism Hiring Program extend your reach further. *Visit dors.maryland.gov or email mdworkmatters@maryland.gov.*

5. Build an Inclusive Hiring Process

Ensure you are set up for success to attract, interview, and hire candidates with disabilities. Keep job descriptions focused on essential functions, and make online applications and pre-employment assessments accessible. Ask every candidate in advance if they need an interview accommodation and confirm that your interview sites meet ADA standards. Train interviewers on what they can and cannot legally ask about a candidate's disability. See *EEOC Disability-Related Resources* at eeoc.gov/disability-discrimination.

6. Make Use of Free and Low-Cost Accommodations

Most accommodations are free: flexible schedules, remote or hybrid work, or accessibility features already built into everyday software. When a purchase is needed as an accommodation, the typical one-time cost is about \$300. This might include items like screen readers, an automatic door opener, and better lighting. Ongoing costs, like interpreting or a job coach, are needed in only a small share of cases. Learn about assistive technology at mdod.maryland.gov/mdtap and visit the Job Accommodation Network at askjan.org.

7. Retain and Advance Talent for the Long Term

Employers benefit when employees are empowered to thrive and grow their careers through ongoing support, accommodation, and training. Build disability-awareness training into onboarding, launch an Employee Resource Group, and recognize managers who mentor employees with disabilities. Keep performance feedback an ongoing conversation rather than a once-a-year review, to support continual growth. Visit askearn.org/page/performance-management.

8. Share Your Success Story

Have you hired, promoted, or mentored an employee with a disability? Tell us about it. Success stories are featured across Maryland state social media to recognize inclusive employers and inspire other Maryland businesses to build disability-inclusive workplaces of their own. Email your story to mdworkmatters@maryland.gov.

