

# Leading Practices on **DISABILITY INCLUSION**



Business Leadership Network  
**USBLN**  
DISABILITY AT WORK



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



**U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations.

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**U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**



Dear Reader:

Successful businesses recognize that incorporating disability in all diversity and inclusion practices positively impacts their companies' bottom line. Corporate CEOs understand that it's cost effective to recruit and retain the best talent regardless of disability. Chief technology officers know that technologies that are used by all employees lead to greater productivity. Senior purchasing managers recognize the economic benefits of broadening their supplier bases to include diverse categories, such as disability-owned businesses. And savvy marketing directors eagerly embrace opportunities to increase their companies' share of new markets.

While businesses sometimes encounter serious challenges as they seek to implement inclusion strategies, many employers have overcome these hurdles with robust and creative practices. As a collaborative initiative to share creative inclusion practices that succeed, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN®) invited congressional and business leaders to participate in the second Corporate Disability Employment Summit: Leading Practices on Disability Inclusion.

Prior to the summit, business leaders were asked to share their successful disability inclusion strategies. This publication highlights these strategies, which businesses of all sizes can use to create a more inclusive workplace, marketplace, and supply chain. Real-life examples, such as these, are important to help businesses realize the wide range of opportunities available and the potential for replicating success. An assessment is also included as a tool to initiate or enhance your company's disability-friendly corporate practices.

Sincerely,

**Thomas J. Donohue**  
President and CEO  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

**Jill Houghton**  
Executive Director  
US Business Leadership Network

# USBLN® Workplace Disability Inclusion Assessment Tool

This checklist is designed to provide employers with a tool to initiate or enhance their disability-friendly corporate practices.

Check the box that best applies to your organization

	YES	NO	NOT APPLICABLE
<b>RECRUITMENT</b>			
The term “disability” is specifically mentioned in diversity and inclusion materials.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job applicants with disabilities are actively recruited.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recruitment plans include community outreach to organizations serving people with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recruiters receive disability awareness, sensitivity training, and tips for interviewing job candidates with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Resource materials regarding prehire accommodations are available for recruiters to easily reference.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recruiting materials are available in alternative formats, e.g., Braille, large print, and electronic.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Application materials are available in alternative formats, and the application process is accessible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prescreening process, assessments, and testing are accessible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The company regularly evaluates its physical plant for accessibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>			
Onboarding process is accessible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hiring managers receive disability awareness and sensitivity training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A companywide reasonable accommodation policy is in place.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A formal accommodation process exists.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If leadership training is available for women and minorities, it is also available for employees with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training courses include provisions for sign language interpreters, materials in alternative accessible formats, and accessible locations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An employee resource group, or affinity group, focused on disabilities exists.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability is included in all diversity and inclusiveness training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>DIVERSITY SUPPLYING</b>			
The company’s diversity supplier program includes outreach to disability-owned companies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any diversity supplier programs that your company offers, e.g., mentoring or small business education, include suppliers with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>TECHNOLOGY ACCESS</b>			
The company’s IT department is knowledgeable about accessible technology.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The company’s website is accessible to users of screen readers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A companywide policy exists requiring that technology tools and resources, e.g., online travel, expenses, and employee benefits, are accessible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>MARKETING</b>			
Images of people with disabilities appear in advertisements, collateral materials, and other external communications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appropriate disability language is required in all documents, including press releases and presentations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This checklist is designed to provide companies with a tool to initiate or enhance their disability-friendly corporate practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



“Our disability-friendly programs like Sensory Friendly Films and FOCUS are not just about being in compliance with government regulations, but also they are about doing the right thing for our guests, our associates, their families ... and our bottom line.”

—Keith Wiedenkiller, SVP and Chief People Officer, AMC Entertainment, Inc.



### COMPANY OVERVIEW

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**Type of Industry:** Movie Exhibition Industry

**Number of Employees:** 8,000

**[www.amctheatres.com](http://www.amctheatres.com)**

AMC Theatres is a company that cares and is committed to making a difference in the lives of our guests and “doing the right thing” in the communities we serve. As a worldwide leader in theatrical exhibition and out-of-home entertainment, we can make a difference in the lives of millions of Americans living with disabilities. For many people, we have the ability to help change their lives and to be “a first:” a first word, a first movie, a first date, a first job.

AMC Theatres has created a program to give families affected by autism and other special needs an opportunity to enjoy their favorite films in a safe and accepting environment monthly with Sensory Friendly Films. To provide a more comfortable setting for this audience, the lights are turned up in the auditorium, the sound level is brought down, no previews or advertisements are shown before the movie, and families are able to bring in their own gluten-free,

casein-free snacks. Audience members are also welcome to get up and dance, walk, shout, or sing; in other words, AMC’s expected audience behavior standards are relaxed for these performances.

In addition, AMC created a national program titled FOCUS (Furthering Opportunities, Cultivating Untapped Strengths) to encourage and facilitate hiring and employing people with disabilities at our theatres. The program has doubled the employment of associates with disabilities by identifying and eliminating barriers to employment through collaboration with the Autism Society, academic professionals, job coaches, transition experts, and vocational rehabilitation agencies. FOCUS incorporates universal design at every stage of the employment process, from modified applications, to the “traveling” interview, to extended training timelines, to visually simplified job aids.



“In order for Ernst & Young to fulfill its purpose of building a better working world, we strive to create the highest performing teams that empower people of all abilities to reach their full potential and leverage differences to produce better business results.”

—Steve Howe, Americas Managing Partner, Ernst & Young



Ernst & Young is committed to fostering a flexible and inclusive workplace culture by providing the tools, resources, environment, and relationships that enable our people of all abilities to be comfortable and productive.

#### Abilities-related professional networks at Ernst & Young:

- AccessAbilities™ provides guidance about and raises awareness of workplace issues affecting people with disabilities.
- Abilities Champions are our local and functional group AccessAbilities leaders.
- Parents Network focuses on parents of children with special needs.
- Caregivers Circle is for people who act as caregivers for adults with disabilities.

#### We have undertaken a wide range of initiatives, including the following:

- Enhancing accessibility in our offices, technologies, communications, training, events, and internal business processes.
- Standardizing assistive technologies for easier computer and communications use.
- Educating our people on etiquette, language, and work habits that are respectful and inclusive.

### COMPANY OVERVIEW

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**Type of Industry:** Assurance, tax, transaction, and advisory services

**Number of Employees:** 167,000

**www.ey.com**

- Streamlining and centralizing our work adjustment (accommodation) processes.
- Raising awareness of nonvisible disabilities and how to support colleagues working with nonapparent disabilities.
- Supporting disability-owned businesses in our supplier diversity program and through our founding sponsorship of the Disability Owned Business Enterprise certification program.
- Helping veterans with disabilities and their families through our founding sponsorship of Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans' Families (for family members of veterans with disabilities) and support of its parent, the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF), through our new EY-IVMF Fellowship Program.
- Supporting the development of the American Association of People with Disabilities/US Business Leadership Network Disability Equality Index by serving on its founding advisory board.
- Building a pipeline of young talent with disabilities through sponsoring Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities, creating tools for job seekers, and mentoring students through the Mitsubishi Foundation student mentoring program, Disability Mentoring Days, and Aspergers Syndrome Training and Employment Partnership's career exploration series.



“Understanding our diverse customers and creating a workplace in which all employees are valued and supported are critical to our success as a company. We can better serve our customers when we leverage the unique talents, viewpoints, and experiences of our employees.”

—Bob Wall, Senior Vice President, Human Services Group and Chief Human Resource Officer, Florida Blue, Florida's Blue Cross and Blue Shield Company



### COMPANY OVERVIEW

Type of Industry: Health Solutions

Number of Employees: 11,100

[www.bcbsfl.com](http://www.bcbsfl.com)

Florida Blue's workplace initiatives span multiple dimensions and accountabilities that focus on providing real-work experience to people with disabilities while driving employee awareness and engagement through education. Our leadership's commitment to the inclusion of people with disabilities is exemplified by our work with our employee resource group possAbilities that focuses on employees, their family members, and our customers with disabilities.

- Since 2006, Florida Blue has participated in Disability Mentoring Day, an event that provides participants with an overview of Florida Blue's business and work environment. Mentees are paired with a Florida Blue team member to experience “a day in the life” of the mentor and team member. At the conclusion of the program, recruiters from Florida Blue and our subsidiaries provide each mentee with career advice to assist them in their job search.
- Since 2007, Florida Blue has hosted numerous internships through the First Coast Business Leadership Network, the Wounded Warriors Project, and the Independent Living Center. Florida Blue was the only employer in Duval County to participate in the on-the-job training program initiated by the Obama administration in 2011.
- Since 2008, possAbilities has presented learning opportunities during the annual Florida Blue Diversity Conference & Expo and the annual recognition of National Disability Employee Awareness Month. These events are open to all Florida Blue employees and have included sessions on the following:
  - Disability experience, where employees experience having a disability in a simulated work environment.
  - Mental health issues in the workplace.
  - Presentations to large groups of employees by nationally renowned people with disabilities.
  - Bullying in the workplace workshops. These efforts resulted in our Standard of Conduct policy being revised to include bullying as a form of unacceptable behavior within our workplace.
  - Disability etiquette.
  - Financial considerations for people with disabilities.
  - Available resources for caregivers.





“Manpower’s commitment to people with disabilities has been at the forefront of our workforce development for many years. Project Ability focuses on the tremendous potential and ability of veterans and people with disabilities, building a bridge to employment for those who would otherwise remain unemployed and providing the top talent that our business clients require to remain competitive.”

—Jorge Perez, Senior Vice President, Manpower North America



Manpower®

### COMPANY OVERVIEW

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**Type of Industry:** Workforce Solutions

**Number of Employees:** 30,000

**[www.manpower.com](http://www.manpower.com)**

Project Ability is Manpower’s national disability employment program. It was formally created in 2010 owing to our long-standing commitment and success employing veterans and individuals with disabilities in our local communities. Because of our relationships with both employers and job seekers, we are uniquely positioned to determine where current and future skills gaps are, identify people who need help engaging with the workforce, and develop solutions that bring these two groups together in mutually beneficial ways. We function as a “bridge” to employment for many who would otherwise be unemployed.

In collaboration with vocational rehabilitation, community-based organizations, and employers, Project Ability is designed specifically to help job seekers with disabilities and veterans find meaningful, rewarding employment opportunities. Manpower partners with these groups to identify motivated, work-ready candidates and match them with employers seeking top talent. At the same time, Project Ability helps employers hire hard-to-fill jobs with targeted recruitment strategies and implement or expand existing disability inclusion programs.

Project Ability has a replicable and flexible framework using a proven four-step implementation process to ensure consistency in messaging, training, and scalability. We identify roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, follow a formal communications plan, and use standard program support materials. We deliver disability awareness and sensitivity training to all Manpower colleagues and our clients if needed. In addition, we provide client and candidate marketing collateral and operations support with overall program strategy provided by our National Project Ability Leader.

Project Ability provides a talent solution that works for the benefit of employers, veterans and people with disabilities, and the community at large. Individuals with disabilities represent the country’s largest minority throughout all segments of diversity. With a talent and skills shortage occurring in our workforce, tapping into this motivated and qualified population is very relevant. By unleashing the human potential of people whose work opportunities are most limited, we supply innovative solutions to meet the workforce needs of organizations, while enabling individuals to achieve all that is humanly possible.

## Including Disability in the Workplace



“People with disabilities cross all dimensions of diversity, representing the largest pool of underutilized talent in this country. As Executive Sponsor of our Disability Resource Group, I’ve seen firsthand how our members and supporters work together to build a more productive and inclusive work environment.”

—*Kent L. Statler, Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, Commercial Systems (Executive Sponsor, Rockwell Collins Disability Network Group & Supporters)*



“Being in the defense industry, the skills that Wounded Warriors bring to the table are a natural fit for our organization. Their battle experience with our products and technology yields strong customer affinity and helps us achieve our vision of ‘building trust every day’.”

—*Robert A. (Bobby) Sturgell, Senior Vice President, Washington Operations (Executive Sponsor, Rockwell Collins Military & Veterans Employee Resource Group)*

# Rockwell Collins

Building trust every day

Rockwell Collins understands that fostering an environment of inclusion, collaboration, and ownership serves as a catalyst for increasing our competitive advantage. The diverse viewpoints, ideas, and backgrounds of our employees fuel our spirit of innovation—and are key to our business success.

We recognize the value that persons with disabilities bring to the workplace, including our veterans with disabilities. Once people with disabilities join Rockwell Collins, our support for them goes well beyond orientation. A robust employee resource group, “Disability Network Group and Supporters,” is available to assist them in the onboarding process, create awareness, and act as a support system as they navigate the processes and procedures of a global company. The group also keeps our executives and senior-level leaders up to date on best practices in supporting those with disabilities in their day-to-day work.

The Disability Network Group and Supporters focuses on the following strategic pillars:

- Our People—recruiting and retaining people with disabilities

## COMPANY OVERVIEW

**Type of Industry:** Aerospace & Defense

**Number of Employees:** 19,000

**[www.rockwellcollins.com](http://www.rockwellcollins.com)**

- Our Workplace—creating an inclusive environment for people with disabilities
- Our Marketplace—improving the quality of life for people with disabilities in the community

In addition, we find great value in working with outside organizations, such as the Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN), the National Organization on Disability (NOD), and the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN®). Each of these organizations supports us as we make a concerted effort to ensure that we are building a diverse talent pipeline.

At Rockwell Collins, we strive to harness the creativity and ingenuity of our diverse workforce and create an environment where our employees are motivated to use their talents to achieve their full potential. We see direct benefits of our work.

Whether it’s generating new ideas, developing new solutions, or questioning the status quo, continuing to value diversity and inclusion across our company has served us well.



“We’re in the business of connecting people. Our employees with disabilities serve as a reminder that without strategic insight, diverse points of view and varying abilities, we’d fall short of providing our accessibility customers with the innovative solutions for which they turn to us every day.”

—Ralph Reid, Vice President of Corporate Responsibility,  
Sprint Nextel Corporation



### COMPANY OVERVIEW

**Type of Industry:** Telecommunications

**Number of Employees:** 40,000

**[www.sprint.com](http://www.sprint.com)**

Sprint has a strong reputation for supporting both employees and customers with disabilities. Supporting employees with disabilities results in a richer and more inclusive employee base, which represents the same broad diversity of our customer base. Employees with disabilities are drivers of awareness, ambassadors for attracting new customers, and a pipeline for prospective employees.

Earlier this year, Sprint announced a new Employee Resource Group (ERG) called REAL DEAL™ for employees with disabilities and their co-workers who support them. The mission of REAL DEAL is to be all-inclusive of types of disabilities that are recognized by the American Disability Association (200+) and initially will have three focus areas:

- Cognitive—including Down Syndrome and dementia
- Mobility—including arthritis, Multiple Sclerosis, and loss of limbs
- Sensory—including vision and hearing loss

In addition to our commitment to our employees with disabilities, we are passionate about providing the highest quality wireless service for our customers with disabilities. Sprint has long been a leader in the accessibility space and has been the nation’s premier provider of Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) for the past 22 years. Currently Sprint is the TRS provider in 30 states and the TRS provider for the federal government.

Sprint was selected as the winner in the 2013 Disability Matters Marketplace category, which recognizes excellence in marketing products and services that meet the needs of the disability community. This recognition stems from Sprint’s innovative Sprint accessibility-themed “ID packs,” which can be enabled on select Sprint smartphone devices. These ID packs enable users to operate their phones without the need to see or read what is being displayed on the screen.



“Accessibility is not only a business imperative, but it is a global responsibility. With a mission to inspire and nurture the human spirit—one person, one cup, and one neighborhood at a time, Starbucks is committed to making our stores and work environment welcoming and accessible to all. From store design to retail training to world-class customer service, we seek to provide our partners, our customers, and the communities we serve with the best possible Starbucks Experience.”

—Cliff Burrows, Group President, Americas, Europe, Middle East, Africa, and Teavana, Starbucks Coffee Company



### COMPANY OVERVIEW

Type of Industry: Retail

Number of Employees: 200,000

[www.starbucks.com](http://www.starbucks.com)

#### Disability in the Workplace and Marketplace

It happens millions of times each week—a customer receives a drink from a Starbucks barista, but each interaction is unique. It’s just a moment in time—just one hand reaching over the counter to present a cup to another. But it’s a connection. We honor that connection.

We strive for Starbucks to be a place where people with disabilities are naturally included, where accessibility is seamlessly integrated and where universal design is a reflection of our global responsibility. We are using our scale for good and approaching our work through the lens of humanity. Providing a welcoming experience inclusive of disability etiquette and cultural sensitivity, while engaging people in an accessible environment are part of our efforts to provide the Starbucks Experience to everyone.

#### Leading Practices Incorporate Parallel Efforts

- Core Accessibility Standards to Reinforce Company Values of Inclusion
  - Websites
  - Facilities
  - Communication
  - Technology

- “Find New Ways to See” for Innovating Our Approach
  - Create intersections between access and business through our Access Expo and Provocative Panel Series.
  - Use social media to connect with communities and become part of the fabric of the digital disability neighborhood.
  - Design innovative products, such as our Braille Starbucks card, carabiner tumbler, and tactile mugs—products that reach out to the disability community but, ultimately, touch all of us.
  - Use the creative dexterity of the Starbucks Access Alliance, partners (employees) with disabilities and allies of access, to move the world toward commonplace universal design, one accessible world, one person at a time.



“Diversity among UPS people is one of our company’s greatest assets. The varying thoughts, ideas and insights of our employees directly contribute to our ability to compete in a global marketplace.”

—John McDevitt, Senior Vice President of Human Resources and Labor, UPS



Diversity and inclusion are integral parts of our global strategy, just as they are part of the social fabric for a company operating in more than 220 countries and territories. We understand that diversity encompasses more than race and gender. It extends the full spectrum of differences, ranging from ethnicity to sexual orientation to gender identity to physical ability.

Inclusiveness, respect, and cooperation are core values that help drive the way we do business with our customers and suppliers. We work hard to ensure an inclusive experience for everyone at UPS® by developing and maximizing talent, fostering teamwork, and recognizing the skills of an increasingly diverse workforce.

For example, the UPS Air Group in Louisville, Kentucky, has been leading the organization in providing opportunities for individuals with disabilities by bringing together more than 50 agency representatives from 30 different organizations focused on helping individuals with disabilities secure gainful employment. It also launched the Disability Coalition, known as the Coalition for Workforce Diversity (CWD). The coalition works to connect companies and agencies to promote diversity in hiring, training, empowering, and retaining people with disabilities through the following:

- Ongoing collaborative meetings with local agencies and employers.

### COMPANY OVERVIEW

**Type of Industry:** Transportation

**Number of Employees:** 394,000

**www.ups.com**

- The creation of a Coalition Steering Committee, in which senior management leadership provides oversight.
- The formation of an internal UPS Business Resource Group (BRG) focused on developing and supporting individuals with disabilities in the workplace.
- A formal referral process identifying agency “clients” for employment consideration.
- Agency support, including assisting with the application process, interviewing, orientation and training, as well as providing disability sensitivity training.

Moving forward, CWD plans to expand the number of employers involved, thereby providing a wide range of employment opportunities across multiple industries. Through our efforts in leading the coalition, UPS was named “Employer of the Year” by the Harbor House, a Louisville-based nonprofit organization committed to providing support to individuals with physical and developmental disabilities.

Since the late 1960s, The UPS Foundation, the charitable arm of UPS, has provided financial support for programs extended by disability-focused organizations. These organizations support people with both physical and mental disabilities.



“HCSC is committed to serving people with disabilities in the marketplace, partnering with them in the business community, and hiring them for their unique perspectives and abilities.”

—Patricia Hemingway Hall, President and Chief Executive Officer,  
Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC)

# HCSC

Health Care Service Corporation

## COMPANY OVERVIEW

**Type of Industry:** Health Benefits

**Number of Employees:** 19,198

**www.hcsc.com**

At HCSC, providing a workplace that supports employees and customers with disabilities is essential. We continue to enhance disability inclusion in our operations, policies, and practices.

HCSC established a Disability Taskforce of key leaders to help ensure that ongoing considerations are made for persons with disabilities. We have initiated major disability integration projects to make certain that our websites and internal portals are accessible to customers and employees with disabilities and have built closed-captioning access into video and meeting services across the enterprise. HCSC also sponsors a disability mentoring day for high school students and participates in an enterprise internship program for students with disabilities.

Our disability-focused business resource group (BRG), In-Abled, helps develop skill-building content on working effectively with persons with disabilities for our annual diversity and inclusion training. In-Abled also partners with our marketing teams to support efforts to reach potential customers with disabilities.

HCSC’s Supporters of Military Veterans BRG launched a program that continues to increase our veteran and disability hires. BRG members facilitate partnerships for HCSC with several organizations to identify veteran talent, provide training for management on assessing and hiring veteran talent, and serve as mentors for new veteran hires.

The Disability Taskforce works to further the disability hiring initiative, leverage existing partnerships, and secure additional partnerships for sourcing. Both our veterans and disability BRG members attend job fairs and volunteer to support such community organizations as Access Living, the Misericordia Foundation, USO, and The Salvation Army.

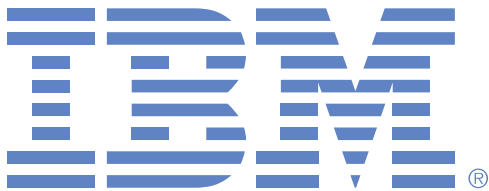
Vendors owned by persons with disabilities and veterans with disabilities are included in our supply chain with ongoing efforts to identify additional certified vendors.

HCSC’s commitment to diversity and inclusion is the foundation on how we serve our customers, engage our employees, connect with our local communities, and partner with suppliers and other business stakeholders.



“The demographics around the world indicate that the population is changing rapidly and becoming even more culturally diverse. This shift means that global companies like IBM must continue to attract talent to ensure that our workforce mirrors the marketplace we serve.”

—Ron Glover, Vice President, Diversity and Workforce Policy, IBM



### COMPANY OVERVIEW

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**Type of Industry:** Computer Technology and Consulting

**Number of Employees:** 434,246

**www.ibm.com**

In 1914, IBM hired its first employee with a disability who was a World War I veteran. Disability is fully integrated into all of IBM's efforts to promote workforce diversity and equal opportunity. The company has a central, reasonable accommodation fund, partners with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) to provide internship and full-time opportunities, and has proactively sought to increase the number of employees with disabilities worldwide. To ensure that IBM successfully recruits and retains employees with disabilities, disability awareness training is provided to IBM recruitment specialists, employees, and managers.

IBM has been equally active in the disability aspects of developing products and delivering services by identifying technology solutions for people with disabilities.

In 1999, the IBM board of directors codified a standard for product accessibility by adopting Corporate Instruction 162, which contains a mandate to assess accessibility characteristics in all new products. As a result, IBM focuses on weaving in accessibility during the initial product development stage and then conducts accessibility assessments

at key checkpoints. Accessibility is a key criteria that IBM uses to select vendors and suppliers, and it is identified as a requirement when procuring components from third parties.

In addition, IBM provides consulting services for companies that seek to integrate accessibility solutions into their corporate activities. IBM Accessibility Services enables its clients to realize the benefits of integrating accessibility. It also drives accessibility into the company's product development process and invents technologies that help remove barriers and extend capabilities.

In 2000, IBM established the IBM Human Ability and Accessibility Center as a part of its research community. The center's mission is to make technology and other information easily available to people who have visual, cognitive, or motor disabilities by applying research technologies and introducing software solutions. In 2010, IBM established Accessible Workplace Connection, a Web application that enables employees with a permanent or temporary disability to request modifications or adjustments to perform the essential functions of their job.



“Diverse perspectives help us solve everyday challenges, develop innovative ideas and grow our business.”

—Robert Niblock, Chairman, President, & Chief Executive Officer,  
Lowe's Companies, Inc.



### COMPANY OVERVIEW

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**Type of Industry:** Home Improvement

**Number of Employees:** 245,000

**[www.lowes.com](http://www.lowes.com)**

Lowe's is dedicated to building a diverse workforce and fostering an inclusive culture that promotes diversity of thought and celebrates the unique talents that each professional brings to the company.

Lowe's encourages collaborative engagement with key stakeholders across the marketplace and workplace. Our executive leadership team, beginning with Lowe's Chairman, President, and CEO Robert Niblock, is devoted to driving diversity of thought through collaboration and strategic alliances. Together, we're committed to treating each customer, employee, member of the community, investor, and vendor with respect and dignity.

A diverse and inclusive workforce helps Lowe's provide our diverse customer base with the products, services, and solutions they need throughout all stages of their home improvement projects. Embracing and elevating diversity strengthens our dedication to continuous

improvement—leveraging innovation, collaboration, and learning and development programs designed to foster open communication, inclusion, and equal employment opportunities for all.

Lowe's remains focused on investing in solutions that create value for our customers and our company. Our supplier diversity program is part of our overall commitment to enhance economic development in the diverse communities we serve.

Lowe's is a member of the National Minority Supplier Development Council, multiple regional supplier diversity councils, as well as many organizations and associations, including the US Business Leadership Network®, the National Organization on Disability, the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility, the Information Technology Senior Management Forum, the Hispanic IT Executive Council, and The Executive Leadership Council.





“At Merck, we must strive to find that unconquerable soul in each of us and allow our colleagues with disabilities to shine, prosper, and contribute to the success of the enterprise. As a company, if we include everybody, give everybody a shot, and treat everybody fairly, that makes us more competitive.”

—Dr. Sethu K. Reddy, AVP Medical Affairs,  
Differently Able Business Insight Roundtable Leader



At Merck, we are dedicated to creating an environment that supports the needs of all employees, including those who live with disabilities, and we make a substantive investment to leverage diversity and inclusion as a source of our competitive advantage.

### Recruiting Diverse Talent

Merck has several programs under way to ensure that it recruits best-in-class diverse talent.

- We work with SourceCast, a job distribution service, to post openings to each local career center and state office, which, in turn, helps candidates find opportunities that fit their interests.
- Merck collaborates with Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD) to learn how to more effectively prepare students with disabilities for recruitment.
- The company partners with the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences (AAAS) to source interns with disabilities in science, engineering, mathematics, computer sciences, and business.
- Merck's Employee Resource Group, Allies for Disabilities (AFD), sponsors Disability Mentoring Day to promote career development for students and job seekers with disabilities through job shadowing and career exploration.

### COMPANY OVERVIEW

**Type of Industry:** Pharmaceuticals, Vaccines, Biologics, Consumer Health Care, and Animal Health

**Number of Employees:** 84,000

**www.merck.com**

### Retention and an Inclusive Work Environment

Merck understands that enabling employees with disabilities to perform the necessary functions of their jobs through an inclusive work environment makes good business sense.

- As part of Merck's diversity and inclusion strategy, employee resource groups are tied to business objectives around three key areas: Talent Management and Inclusion, Corporate Reputation and Responsibility, and Business Insights. Under this structure, all employees globally are able to participate in the Business Insight Roundtable and contribute through their unique perspectives.
- Merck provides training resources to build awareness and help employees work more effectively with colleagues who have disabilities. An eLearning module was designed to underscore the increased business opportunities that employees with disabilities bring to the workplace and marketplace and to help leaders operationalize workplace accommodations in their organizations to further enhance employee productivity.

Merck is committed to advancing its leadership position as the No. 1 trusted and valued health care partner to all people. We firmly believe that creating a globally diverse talent pool is critical to this success.



“I see a lot of potential for technology to address the individual needs of all the world’s people.”

—Steve Ballmer, Chief Executive Officer, Microsoft



Microsoft, a technology company delivering devices and services to global customers with and without disabilities, empowers people around the world to reach their full potential. By leveraging the knowledge and experience of our diverse workforce, we are able to create innovative and accessible technologies to meet the needs of our customers, partners, and communities.

At Microsoft, we understand that diversity and inclusion drive innovation and market differentiation and that we must foster a diverse, inclusive, and collaborative environment to help our business grow and prosper. We are proud to be recognized as the No. 9 company for people with disabilities by DiversityInc magazine.

### **Candidate Experience: Hiring Great Talent**

Microsoft developed a Disability Tool Kit for recruiters, which provides guidance on disability awareness and etiquette and how to engage in effective, respectful communication when working with candidates with disabilities. The company participates in targeted job fairs, strategic alliances with employment networks, internship programs, and organizations aimed at career fulfillment.

After employees are hired, Microsoft provides state-of-the-art adaptive technologies, at zero cost to the employees, to enable them to be successful regardless of their abilities and disabilities. These technologies include such things as voice recognition software, Braille readers and printers, and touch-sensitive whiteboards.

## COMPANY OVERVIEW

**Type of Industry:** Technology, Services, and Software

**Number of Employees:** 97,811

**www.microsoft.com**

In addition, Microsoft offers training focused on disability etiquette and access to orientation and mobility specialists as well as oral and sign language interpreters.

### **Employee Experience: disAbility**

The disAbility Employee Resource Group (ERG) provides employees and parents of children with disabilities at Microsoft with a rich community to explore common interests and needs. The ERG supports employees through accommodation support, training, ERG awareness, and community outreach.

Other activities include an annual Microsoft Ability Summit and events during Disability Awareness Month. The Ability Summit is a unique opportunity designed to raise awareness internally about accessible engineering practices at Microsoft and share company resources and support for employees and family members with disabilities.

### **Customer Experience: Disability in the Marketplace: Accessibility Customer Support Team**

Supporting all our customers is important to Microsoft. The company recently launched a program that provides customers with access to dedicated Microsoft support accessibility specialists via telephone and email. This support team has a customer satisfaction rating greater than 95%. The program has recently expanded to the U.K., Ireland, and South Africa.



“We are dedicated to fostering a work environment that values diversity and inclusion, creates innovation, improves productivity, and boosts profitability. People with disabilities are an important component of a diverse pool of talent, and we are determined to draw from this valuable resource. We work to remove productivity barriers to ensure that people with disabilities have effective access and accommodations.”

—Sandra Evers-Manly, Vice President, Corporate Responsibility, Northrop Grumman

### **NORTHROP GRUMMAN**

#### **COMPANY OVERVIEW**

**Type of Industry:** Aerospace and Defense

**Number of Employees:** 70,000

**[www.northropgrumman.com](http://www.northropgrumman.com)**

Northrop Grumman’s commitment to supporting people with disabilities is demonstrated through a number of activities, including the following:

- Operation IMPACT is a program that provides career transition support and employment to servicemembers severely injured in combat. Northrop Grumman employees advocate for and assist wounded warriors by providing resume and interview coaching and identifying job opportunities and other services as these wounded warriors transition to the private sector.
  - As part of our Supplier Diversity efforts, we work with disability-owned companies such as Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind, which is fully owned and operated by visually impaired employees. We also support AbilityOne, which serves the mission of the Department of Defense and other agencies to provide employment, education, knowledge transfer, and training for the workforces of people who are blind or have significant disabilities.
  - Our Victory Over Impairment and Challenge Enterprise group has been a catalyst in the company for cultural change, helping reveal workplace challenges for employees with disabilities and drive swift solutions.
- We are improving our self-identification and disclosure rate; currently, about 3% of the workforce has self-identified as a person with a disability or veteran with a disability.
  - We launched accessibility and accommodation initiatives, not just to improve physical building facilities but also for our electronic information, websites, systems, communications, and technology. We offer Braille business cards and alternative format materials.
  - We developed a disability online inclusion Tool Kit in partnership with Cornell University.
  - An accommodations design team is working on an enterprisewide process to handle reasonable accommodation requests through a centralized funding source.
  - The Northrop Grumman Foundation donated \$5 million to the USO Warrior and Family Center in Ft. Belvoir, Virginia, which provides a “home away from home” for troops, military families, and those recovering from the visible and invisible wounds of war.



“OfficeMax embraces the strength of diversity and inclusion by accepting all differences and removing limitations. This enables for greater innovation in developing solutions for the company and its customers”

—Carolynn Brooks, Vice President, Chief Diversity Officer, OfficeMax, Inc.



OfficeMax has a diverse and inclusive workplace culture that attracts qualified associates with a wide range of experiences, which leads to innovative business solutions. Hiring people with disabilities has enabled us to tap into a talented pool of workers who bring unique experiences and an understanding. This provides OfficeMax with a distinct competitive advantage. Our Veterans and People with Disabilities Initiative is an example of the OfficeMax commitment. It's a companywide effort to improve outreach, drive inclusion, and increase the hiring of veterans and individuals with disabilities and promoting disability and veteran-owned businesses within our market.

To expand its employment programs for people with disabilities, OfficeMax uses funds awarded by the Kessler Foundation to set up training programs in four markets. New candidates will receive training in a safe environment, at their own pace, while experiencing both distribution and logistics and retail and office supply to help determine the best career path for them.

To launch the program, OfficeMax has partnered with a number of organizations, including the following:

**Aspire**, an organization that started OfficeMax on our journey, worked with us to improve our interviewing and hiring processes to help remove barriers for individuals with disabilities. Going forward, Aspire will house one of our training environments through

### COMPANY OVERVIEW

**Type of Industry:** Office Products

**Number of Employees:** 22,000

**www.officemax.com**

support from a Kessler Foundation grant. In addition, the organization sponsors CoffeeWorks Coffee, which is roasted and packaged by people with disabilities. We now sell CoffeeWorks Coffee in our catalog and in the cafeteria at our corporate office.

**Turning Pointe Autism Foundation**, located in Naperville, Illinois, afforded us the first opportunity to develop a training program to increase the pool of qualified candidates we could hire.

**Vocational Rehabilitation Services** (VR) is an active national partner that provides a spectrum of support and resources at various locations in 17 states. With VR's support, OfficeMax built an on-site training environment at our McCalla PowerMax distribution center and hired more than 30 new associates.

**Kessler Foundation** provides funding to assist in the building of four training environments in Chicago, Las Vegas, Dallas, and Columbus, Ohio. A minimum of 60 candidates will be trained with a commitment to hire at least 40 new associates. This project has created additional partnerships in each market to ensure the success of the program.

As OfficeMax moves forward with this inclusion initiative, we are extending our outreach to veterans and are seeking other partners to help the program become a true gateway to employment.



“The Hartford, a leading provider of group disability insurance and workers’ compensation, has long supported meaningful employment and productive lives for people with disabilities. Our ‘Ability Philosophy’ focuses on helping individuals overcome limitations and reach their full potential. As a founding partner of U.S. Paralympics, we renewed our commitment through 2016. We are proud to continue to support individuals as they break through limitations to achieve greatness.”

—Liam E. McGee, Chairman, President and CEO, The Hartford



Approximately 1.7 million working-age Americans will experience a disabling illness or injury in 2013, according to the Council of Disability Awareness.

As a provider of group disability insurance and workers’ compensation, The Hartford partners with employers of all sizes to put into action initiatives to help employees who experience a disability return to active, productive lives.

Here are some of these initiatives:

- Resources, such as white papers and webinars, to help employers understand regulations regarding absence and disability.
- Work site evaluations designed to help employers run a safe business.
- Educational campaigns to help consumers understand how disability insurance can help protect their financial future if they experience a disability.
- Medical professionals to help consumers at every step of the claims process.
- Emotional, legal, and financial help for employees with disabilities so that they can better focus on recovery.

### COMPANY OVERVIEW

**Type of Industry:** Property and Casualty, Group Benefits and Mutual Funds

**Number of Employees:** 20,000

**[www.thehartford.com](http://www.thehartford.com)**

- Return-to-work programs that embody The Hartford’s “Ability Philosophy”—a focus on what one can do, not on physical limitations.

The Hartford has a long-held belief that sports are an important part of physical rehabilitation following a disabling illness or injury. In 2003, the company began a founding partnership with U.S. Paralympics, a division of the United States Olympic Committee dedicated to recruiting and training elite athletes with physical disabilities. The Hartford renewed its commitment through 2016.

As part of this partnership, The Hartford holds more than 200 events each year throughout the country. Many events are aimed at raising awareness among The Hartford’s business partners about the value that employees with disabilities bring to the workplace. At The Hartford’s Paralympic Experience, able-bodied business professionals experience what it’s like to overcome a physical limitation to achieve success.

The Hartford’s Paralympic events demonstrate how people with disabilities can strive for personal and professional goals with no boundaries and achieve what may seem impossible.



“We know that a strong, healthy supplier network reflecting the demographics of our community supports economic development. We always keep in mind that we can’t be one of the world’s great companies unless we continue to become more diverse and inclusive.”

—CaSondra Devine, Senior VP & Senior Business Manager,  
Corporate Supplier Diversity, Wells Fargo



**WELLS  
FARGO**

### COMPANY OVERVIEW

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**Type of Industry:** Financial Services

**Number of Employees:** 265,000

**[www.wellsfargo.com](http://www.wellsfargo.com)**

Diversity at Wells Fargo is a business imperative. Aligning with our customer base, engaging our communities, and attracting and retaining diverse suppliers are critical to our success.

We are committed to building relationships in the communities we serve through developing, including, and using disability-owned businesses. It is our practice that diverse suppliers have the maximum amount of opportunities to participate in supplier contracts. Through education and awareness, measurement and accountability, and partnership development, we integrate supplier diversity into all aspects of our business. By developing diverse suppliers, including certified disability-owned businesses, we help strengthen the economic base of the communities we serve. Wells Fargo is a founding member of USBLN®'s Disability Supplier Diversity Program.

Our partnerships expand across regional and national organizations that share our commitment to support programs and services provided to the diverse business community, including the following:

- National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC)
- National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC)
- US Business Leadership Network® (USBLN®)
- Women’s Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC)

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is key to being one of the world’s great companies. It lets us take advantage of the creativity and innovation that come from multiple perspectives and allows us to respond quickly and effectively to customers’ needs at home and across the globe. It also helps us understand our customers more fully, see business opportunities in new ways, and succeed in serving the needs of our expanding customer segments.



“Qualcomm is committed to providing an environment of inclusion and equality for all people, including those with disabilities. That is a fundamental principle that guides us in the way we conduct our business and interact with our employees, partners, and customers around the world. It’s the right thing to do. It’s who we are.”

—Paul E. Jacobs, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Qualcomm



Qualcomm appreciates the critical role that inclusion and diversity play in fueling invention and innovation. It requires many different perspectives to take an idea, perfect it, and turn it into world-changing technology. And it requires a diverse workforce to come up with those different perspectives.

We strive to create an environment that gives every employee the opportunity to grow and succeed. Internally, we have an Employee Resource Group (ERG) and employee clubs that focus on people with disabilities. We weave disability awareness into our culture and train recruiters, managers, and other staff members regarding reasonable accommodations.

In addition, we have undertaken a wide range of initiatives, including the following:

**Qualcomm Life** business brings the health care and wireless industries together, providing the building blocks for a global wireless health network that connects a growing number of advanced medical devices. Mobile health devices and services help increase access to care, enhance communications between patients and

### COMPANY OVERVIEW

**Type of Industry:** Telecommunications

**Number of Employees:** 26,000

**[www.qualcomm.com](http://www.qualcomm.com)**

caregivers, drive costs out of the system, and improve quality of life for people everywhere.

**Qualcomm’s Vuforia™** augmented reality platform enables software developers to create applications and services that incorporate interactivity with real-world objects—changing the way people see and experience the world. It supports real-time text recognition using smartphone and tablet cameras, enabling a new form of data entry in addition to on-screen keyboards and speech-to-text capabilities.

**Qualcomm’s Wireless Reach** initiative supports programs and solutions that bring the benefits of connectivity to underserved communities globally. For example, in Portugal, Wireless Reach supported local partners on a project that connects people with disabilities through text-to-speech software, eye tracking devices, and control buttons that are used with their mobile phones. In Mexico and South Korea, we partner to provide real-time mobile diabetes management. And in Spain, an augmented reality initiative helps individuals with intellectual disabilities have more autonomy and better integrate into the workplace.



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