

Management and Retention

Are there different strategies or approaches for managing people with disabilities?

What performance expectations should I have of persons with disabilities?

What conduct expectations should I have of persons with disabilities?

What if I am taking disciplinary action and the participant raises the issue of disability?

When can I ask disability-related questions or require documentation of a disability?

How can I effectively retain participants with disabilities?

How do I identify a potential retention problem?

Section VIII: Management and Retention

Key Words and Terms

Accommodations

Disability Business and Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs)

Inclusive Service Environment

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

Reasonable Documentation

Self-Disclose

Are there different strategies or approaches for managing people with disabilities?

No. Managing persons with disabilities in an inclusive service environment is the same as managing effectively in any environment. People with disabilities, like any other participants, have valuable talents, skills, time, and enthusiasm to contribute to the betterment of their communities. Given inclusive environments and accommodations, those contributions will shine through.

Management Tasks	Participants without Disabilities	Participants with Disabilities
Develop Expectations	X	X
Write Service Description	X	X
Provide Training	X	X
Implement Policies and Procedures	X	X
Support	X	X
Participant Development	X	X
Evaluation	X	X

What performance expectations should I have of persons with disabilities?

Managers and supervisors should take care to ensure that they have the same performance expectations of their participants with disabilities as they do of all their participants. If you expect your participants to participate in days of service, expect the same of participants with disabilities. If you expect paperwork or other tasks to be completed, all of your participants should complete those tasks. Having the same expectations of all participants is a key contributing factor to an inclusive service environment.

By the same token, however, take care not to have greater expectations of persons with disabilities. Some media portrayals of persons with disabilities reflect unrealistic images of always optimistic, eager, non-frustrated people. People with disabilities face the same issues, frustrations, and bad days as anyone else.

In some cases, poor performance may warrant verbal warnings or disciplinary action. If the participant that you are disciplining has a disability that should not affect your approach to discipline. People with disabilities are as accountable as anyone else.

What conduct expectations should I have of persons with disabilities?

Managers and supervisors should take care to ensure that they hold their participants with disabilities to the same standards of conduct as they expect of all their participants. If you expect your participants to arrive on time, have that same expectation of participants with disabilities. Even if you have adjusted hours as an accommodation, expect them to arrive at their adjusted arrival time. If you expect your participants to not be impaired by alcohol or illegal substances during service hours, have that same expectation of participants with disabilities. Even though addictions to legal substances are protected disabilities,

they are not an excuse for violations of your rules of conduct.

There are some disabilities that can impact an individual's ability to interact with others, to control emotions, or to judge social and work situations appropriately. Inappropriate behavior, however, is not a disability. If an individual has disclosed a disability that may result in inappropriate behavior, you should discuss accommodations and strategies for ensuring that any behavior is not disruptive to your program. Each situation needs to be dealt with on its own. If a person has not disclosed such a disability, you would handle this behavioral issue as you would with any other participant.

What if I am taking disciplinary action and the participant raises the issue of disability?

In rare instances, an individual who is receiving disciplinary action as a result of poor performance or misconduct may reveal a disability only when he/she realizes that their disability is impacting their success in the program. You should consider opening the process of providing effective accommodations at this point. If you make an accommodation, you should give ample time to determine if the accommodation is successful and if the participant's performance or conduct has improved.

When in doubt, call your Training and Technical Assistance Provider, the National Service Inclusion Project (NSIP) of the University of Massachusetts/Boston, or other resources listed in Appendix D of this Handbook.

When can I ask disability-related questions or require documentation of a disability?

There may be times when a participant requests accommodations but you are unclear about his or her functional limitations. There may be other times when you observe performance problems and you have

reason to believe that a participant's ability to perform essential service functions is impaired by a medical condition. Or you believe that what appears to be a participant's medical problem could pose a direct threat to the health or safety of himself or others. In these instances, you may ask the participant limited disability-related questions or request a limited amount of reasonable documentation about the nature of the disability and its functional limitations as it relates to the essential functions of the position. There is further discussion in the Legal Requirements section, (Section XII) of this Handbook, that explains when disability-related questions and requests for medical information can be made and sets forth the parameters of these inquiries. This can be a complex area and it is sometimes hard to see the issues clearly. Do not hesitate to call upon the technical assistance resources available to you such as the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), your Disability Business and Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC), or the Corporation for National and Community Service's Training and Technical Assistance provider, the National Service Inclusion Project (NSIP). Other resources include:

- [EEOC's Enforcement Guidance: Disability-Related Inquiries and Medical Examinations of Employees Under the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) \(July 2000\)](#), available at www.eeoc.gov.
- [EEOC's Enforcement Guidance: Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship Under the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) \(March 1999\)](#), available at www.eeoc.gov.

How can I effectively retain participants with disabilities?

Retaining participants is a challenge for programs regardless of whether the participant has a disability or not. Effective retention not only requires that participants are satisfied and rewarded, but also that their experience is positive and there is a sense of excitement and fun. Many of the strategies and principles of retention for any participant are true for participants with disabilities. Rather than consider retention of participants with disabilities as a separate and discrete issue,

consider possible issues in the same context as any other. Creativity, flexibility, and a willingness to negotiate responsibly will benefit you, your program, and participants with and without disabilities.

For participants with disabilities, an inclusive service environment, effective accommodations, and open communication are critical to retention. There are some strategies that you can undertake to ensure that participants with disabilities are successful in your program and are able to successfully complete their term of service.

To ensure retention of participants with disabilities:

- Create and maintain a truly inclusive service environment
- Hold participants with disabilities to the same levels of accountability as other participants
- Develop clear expectations and hold participants to these expectations
- Keep the lines of communication clear and open
- Develop clear position descriptions that outline tasks, essential functions, and expectations
- Take action when you see that a participant is not participating

For those issues that may arise that are specific to disability, e.g., the provision of accommodations and truly including an individual with a disability in service, you may need to approach situations with creativity. Relationships that you develop with disability providers, Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs), or key disability leaders in your community can be invaluable in assisting you in this area.

How do I identify a potential retention problem?

As you think about specific issues regarding retention, be sure to evaluate the issue at hand to determine whether it is a retention issue specific to disability, or whether the participant is facing issues not at all related to disability. This is an important first step because it will help clearly identify the issues that are at hand.

<p>Participants are <i>more</i> likely to complete their service assignments when the following exists:</p>	<p>Participants are <i>less</i> likely to complete their service assignments when the following exist:</p>
<p>They perceive that what they are doing is valuable</p>	<p>They perceive they are given “make work” assignments</p>
<p>They receive appropriate equipment and support</p>	<p>There is a lack of appropriate accommodations or inconsistent or unreliable accommodations.</p>
<p>There is a feeling of belonging</p>	<p>There is a failure to recognize the importance of participation; saying “Just sit this one out.”</p>
<p>There are opportunities for personal growth</p>	<p>Assignments are “dead-ends”</p>
<p>Mutual expectations are met</p>	<p>They perceive a lack of effective and open communication</p>
<p>They are being treated as part of a team</p>	<p>They feel that they are being ignored</p>
<p>They are being challenged</p>	<p>There is unwarranted praise that can be perceived as insincere</p>