

# DESIGNING A DISABILITY INCLUSION PLAN FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

## **I. Purpose of this Workshop**

Design a Disability Engagement Plan tailored to your organization. This worksheet is meant to accompany the presentation at the Grantee Symposium.

## **II. Legal Framework for your Plan**

What is a disability?

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What are some examples of “major life activities” (and eligible for “Reasonable Accommodations”)?

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**What is Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973?** It is a civil rights law that protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination. The non-discrimination requirements of the law apply to organizations that receive financial assistance from any Federal agency, including CNCS. The Act forbids employers and organizations from excluding or denying individuals with disabilities equal opportunity to receive program benefits and services and requires them to make reasonable accommodations.

## **III. General Overarching Principals**

We believe, regardless of limited time and resources, everyone can do something to make strides toward inclusion of service members with disabilities. However, this is only possible if a plan is custom-tailored to fit those unique resources and needs. The process before you is much like visiting a buffet; you are most knowledgeable about how much to put on your plate and which selections make the most sense.

We have divided activities into three (3) major categories (“the ABC’s”).

- A) **Accessibility**
- B) **Building Bridges into the disability community**
- C) **Creating connectivity & deepening relationships**

## **IV. Ideas for Your Disability Engagement Plan**

*Circle or put a mark next to each item you want in your plan. At the end you’ll rank them by number order in the blank provided*

- A) **Accessibility** –a great place to start your work. Making progress here will result in the possibility for equal access and full participation in national service for all members.
  1. \_\_\_\_ Require leadership to take the four ecourses on disability (total time commitment is roughly 1 hour). Topics include: why people with disabilities benefit your program, reasonable accommodations, outreach and inclusive recruiting, making your program accessible, communicating effectively/disability etiquette and modern disability 101.

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### ***Assessing Organizational Access Issues***

2. \_\_\_\_ Working through a checklist on CNCS website that assesses compliance with physical access standards.
  3. \_\_\_\_ Having a discussion on how to address attitudinal barriers within your organization after your management team takes (ecourse 1).
  4. \_\_\_\_ Having a technical staffer determine whether your website meets website accessibility standards for people who use assistive software.
  5. \_\_\_\_ Other Assessment activity: \_\_\_\_\_
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### ***Reasonable Accommodations***

6. \_\_\_\_ Ensure everyone involved with disability accommodations has the contact information for our free technical assistance provider, the Job Accommodation Network (JAN): [www.askjan.org](http://www.askjan.org).
  7. \_\_\_\_ Streamline your internal process for arranging accommodations.
  8. \_\_\_\_ Ensure suitable, feasible accommodations by having managers use the ecourse on reasonable accommodations as a guide to arrange accommodations and use the interactive process.
  9. \_\_\_\_ Ensure all supervisors have had the training to identify accommodation requests, even when members don't use specific terms like "disability" or "Accommodation" to identify their need for support.
  10. \_\_\_\_ When offering service members a position, explain how they can make reasonable accommodation requests (maximizing the time to accommodate).
  11. \_\_\_\_ Take a pro-active approach and describe the challenges service members typically face in welcome materials. This could facilitate realistic accommodation requests.
  12. \_\_\_\_ Facilitate accommodation requests in multiple forums – in writing with an offer to serve, in an announcement during orientation, etc. Some are reluctant due to stigma, will struggle without accommodations but need to hear a request from a trusted source before responding.
  13. \_\_\_\_ Other Accommodation activity: \_\_\_\_\_
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### ***Inclusive & Accessible Recruiting***

14. \_\_\_\_ Ensuring recruitment/outreach/on-boarding information is shared electronically in an accessible document (text-based, not-image based).
  15. \_\_\_\_ When arranging interviews include information about accessible entry into the building as well as the name and email address for the person to contact if there's a request for reasonable accommodations for the interview.
  16. \_\_\_\_ Other Recruiting activity: \_\_\_\_\_
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### ***Measuring Progress in Inclusion Efforts***

17. \_\_\_\_ Encourage members to complete the voluntary disability status question – for demographic and recruitment purposes (for the first time, the exit forms include a question shortened from the question federal employees answer on their personnel forms. We put it on the exit form because it offers service members the opportunity to share information in a stigma-free zone since there isn't formal interaction following the completion of the form).

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18. \_\_\_\_ If you have internal measurement tools where you collect demographic data like the number of service members with disabilities, consider sharing with [disability@cns.gov](mailto:disability@cns.gov)

19. \_\_\_\_ Other measurement activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Accessibility ideas/notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**B) Building Bridges into the disability community - *Since it is against the law to ask whether someone has a disability before offering them a service position, the permissible way to recruit more members with disabilities is to do outreach with sources where people with disabilities are going to be reached.***

20. \_\_\_\_ Become part of the Disability Engagement Slot Grant program – expanding your program by a few more service members (as long as they have disabilities).

***Recruitment sources guaranteed to be comprised of people with disabilities***

21. \_\_\_\_ College Accommodation Centers for Students with Disabilities: you could do outreach to recruit college students with disabilities at the center where they coordinate their educational accommodations.

22. \_\_\_\_ State & local vocational rehabilitation agencies: have clients with disabilities looking for practical experience to compliment the education and other training this agency funds. It is possible recruiting here will result in members bringing their assistive state-funded reasonable accommodations (like an adapted computer) to use in service.

23. \_\_\_\_ Independent Living Centers: each state and even rural areas have these non-residential disability community centers that provide training, resources and support to people with disabilities living independently in the community.

24. \_\_\_\_ Membership-based disability organization comprised of people with the disability the group is named after (e.g. National Federation of the Blind, Little People of America... a more complete list is on the disability resource page at CNCS).

25. \_\_\_\_ Other Recruitment sources \_\_\_\_\_

**C) Creating connectivity & deepening relationships- *for those interested in relationship development that could facilitate in a higher yield or even a / pipeline of service members with disabilities flowing into a program.***

26. \_\_\_\_ State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency: work with a state partner to develop a pipeline that continues to feed your program with people seeking the experience/network to launch careers following national service.

27. \_\_\_\_ State's Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities: Nearly all states hold a forum for high school leaders with disabilities which includes a fair focused on future pre-professional opportunities. Ensure your state recruits the leaders from this forum by having a presence at this annual fair and connecting with the alumni present.

28. \_\_\_\_ Governor's Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities: most states have disability committees, usually comprised of leaders within the state's disability community. Networking with members could lead to fruitful pipeline ideas.

29. \_\_\_\_ Offer vacancy information, including accessible information for those with disabilities, and hold information sessions at your local American Job Center because



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