

Fact Sheet 1: Recruitment

Evidence-Based Disability Employment Practice Recommendations for Canadian Employers

About this fact sheet

This fact sheet presents the recruitment recommendations from An Employer Guide to Disability Employment Practices in Canada (Anyinam et al., 2026), a convergence synthesis of 95 Canadian grey literature documents produced by 53 independent organizations. The full guide covers eight domains across the employment lifecycle. This sheet addresses Recruitment.

The recommendations below are condensed for ease of use. Jurisdictional notes, full source document lists, and detailed quality appraisals appear in Chapter 3 of the full guide.

About the evidence

Canadian federal departments, provincial and territorial human rights commissions, accessibility offices, and national disability organizations all publish guidance for employers. The convergence synthesis identified practices where multiple independent organizations arrived at the same recommendation without coordinating with one another.

Convergence classification reflects how many independent organizations support the practice: Strong (six or more sources), Moderate (four to five sources), Low (three sources). Each supporting document was appraised using the CRAAP framework (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, Purpose). The quality flag reports the proportion of sources that scored High on this appraisal: Full confidence (75% or more), Moderate confidence (50–74%), Quality flag (below 50%).

Why recruitment matters

Recruitment practices determine which candidates enter an organization's selection process. The accessibility of job postings, the channels through which positions are advertised, and the criteria applied during screening all shape whether persons with disabilities have equitable opportunity to compete for employment. Across the 95 documents analysed in this synthesis, recruitment attracted some of the strongest and most consistent guidance, with convergence from as many as 24 independent organizations.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1.1 Focus job descriptions on essential functions and outcomes rather than methods of performance

Convergence: Strong Quality: Full confidence (96%) Sources: 24 independent organizations

Write job descriptions around what the role actually requires. Focus on the essential functions and the qualifications truly necessary to perform the job, framed in terms of outcomes and desired skills rather than specific physical capabilities. Strip out qualifications that are not genuinely necessary, such as a driver's licence when the position does not involve driving, or a specific level of education when hands-on skills matter more.

Use inclusive action verbs: "move around the workspace" rather than "walk the floor," or "exchange information" rather than "speak clearly." Where your organization uses applicant tracking systems or AI screening tools, audit them to confirm they filter for legitimate job requirements and do not inadvertently screen out candidates with disabilities. A strengths-based approach broadens the candidate pool and signals that the organization assesses candidates on qualification, not assumption.

Recommendation 1.2 Include accommodation information and an accessibility statement in all job postings

Convergence: Strong **Quality:** Full confidence (96%) **Sources:** 23 independent organizations

Every job posting should include a clear accommodation statement placed before the application instructions, naming a specific contact and explaining how candidates can request support throughout the recruitment process. A strong statement might read: "[Organization Name] is committed to providing an accessible application and interview process. If you require accommodation, please contact [Name] at [email/phone]."

Describe the physical work environment in the posting itself, including scent-free policies, noise levels, accessible washrooms, lighting, and workstation setup. Outline the stages of your selection process so candidates can plan. Write in plain, jargon-free language at roughly a Grade 8 reading level. Include a diversity and inclusion statement that explicitly mentions disability. Remind candidates of their right to accommodation when you contact them for interviews.

Recommendation 1.3 Advertise positions through diverse and disability-specific recruitment channels

Convergence: Strong **Quality:** Full confidence (79%) **Sources:** 14 independent organizations

Reach beyond your usual recruitment networks. Post positions on disability-specific job boards and with community organizations that serve job seekers with disabilities. Build a sourcing plan that includes targeted outreach to disability employment agencies, diversity-focused search firms, and campus career offices with disability programming. Use multiple channels: online platforms, community centres, word-of-mouth referrals, and partnerships with supported employment agencies and government employment services. Encourage staff to share vacancies with underrepresented groups. Targeted referrals increase the likelihood of hiring persons with disabilities.

Recommendation 1.4 Ensure the entire application process is accessible to persons with disabilities

Convergence: Strong **Quality:** Full confidence (92%) **Sources:** 12 independent organizations

Review every step of your application process for barriers. Confirm that job posting platforms and online application forms are compatible with assistive technology, including screen readers. Follow WCAG 2.1 accessibility standards for your careers website. Add alternative text to all images in recruitment materials, keeping it under 125 characters. Accept applications in alternate formats (paper, email, phone) alongside standard online submissions. Identify which fields are mandatory versus optional. Describe any pre-employment tests in advance and note that accessibility supports are available. Schedule communications with candidates in advance so they have time to process and respond.

Recommendation 1.5 Partner with disability employment service providers and community agencies for recruitment

Convergence: Strong **Quality:** Full confidence (92%) **Sources:** 12 independent organizations

Build relationships with disability employment service providers and community agencies in your area. These organizations can source pre-screened, job-ready candidates, support onboarding, provide on-the-job coaching, and offer ongoing workplace support at little or no cost to your organization. Ask potential partners what supports they offer after placement, how long post-hire supports last, and what they expect from your business. Recruitment centres, community living centres, employer networks, and campus disability services offices are all potential partners. Small and medium-sized employers in particular benefit from community organizations that provide expertise, candidate screening, and training resources.

Recommendation 1.6 Use inclusive, plain, and accessible language in job postings and descriptions

Convergence: Strong **Quality:** Full confidence (86%) **Sources:** 7 independent organizations

Use plain, jargon-free language in all job postings and descriptions, aiming for a Grade 8 reading level. Keep sentences short and use bullet points for clarity. Avoid exaggerated job title descriptors such as "rockstar" or "ninja." Do not list excellent verbal communication as a blanket requirement for every role. Remove requirements not directly related to job tasks. Run postings through a gender decoding tool to check that the language does not skew toward any particular group. Include only genuinely essential qualifications. Ensure ads do not contain statements or references that relate directly or indirectly to disability. Offer alternative formats of job postings, including large print, HTML, and plain language versions.

Recommendation 1.7 Include a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in organizational branding and recruitment materials

Convergence: Moderate **Quality:** Full confidence (80%) **Sources:** 5 independent organizations

Place a clear commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion on your organization's website, in employee handbooks, on the intranet, and in all job postings and advertisements. The statement should explicitly mention disability. Make the commitment visible through concrete examples: showcase diversity in your team, highlight employee testimonials, and demonstrate representation in your public-facing materials. Connect your branding to specific actions, such as welcoming applications from persons with disabilities and listing available accommodations. A public commitment signals that inclusion is an operational priority within the organization.

For the full evidence base

Each recommendation in this fact sheet is drawn from Chapter 3 of *An Employer Guide to Disability Employment Practices in Canada*.

Anyinam, C., Coffey, S., Da Silva, C., Graham, L., & Godin-Jacques, C. (2026). An employer guide to disability employment practices in Canada: Evidence-based recommendations from a convergence synthesis of Canadian grey literature. Building Employment Pathways for People with Disabilities Project, National Educational Association of Disabled Students.

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