

Fact Sheet 7: Career Advancement

Evidence-Based Disability Employment Practice Recommendations for Canadian Employers

About this fact sheet

This fact sheet presents the career-advancement 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 Career Advancement.

The recommendations below are condensed for ease of use. Jurisdictional notes, full source document lists, and detailed quality appraisals appear in Chapter 9 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 career advancement matters

Equitable employment of persons with disabilities extends beyond hiring to include advancement, performance management, and professional development. Where these processes are inaccessible or fail to account for accommodations, organizations risk losing employees they have invested in recruiting and onboarding. The five recommendations in this fact sheet draw on convergence from up to 12 independent Canadian sources.

Recommendations

Recommendation 7.1 Ensure fair performance management that accounts for accommodations and adjusts expectations appropriately

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

Performance management must account for accommodations. Do not evaluate an employee negatively for limitations related to a disability that is being, or should be, accommodated. Provide accessibility supports before assessing performance. Put mitigation factors in place so a worker with a disability is not faulted for needs that emerge during a performance discussion. Meet with employees both informally and formally through regularly scheduled one-on-one meetings and annual reviews. If you notice that an employee is facing new challenges, consider whether the situation reflects an accommodation need before treating it as a performance issue. Employees may still be held to legitimate performance standards, provided those standards have been adjusted to reflect the accommodation.

Recommendation 7.2 Ensure training, development, and promotion opportunities are accessible and non-discriminatory

Convergence: Strong **Quality:** Moderate confidence (73%) **Sources:** 11 independent organizations

Ensure training, professional development, and promotion opportunities are accessible and free from discrimination. Remove barriers in training formats, materials, and delivery. Encourage the promotion of persons with disabilities based on merit, equity, and seniority. Provide career development support including leadership opportunities, speaking engagements, and educational programmes. Ensure individuals from marginalized groups who are promoted into leadership have adequate support to succeed. Co-invest in skill development programmes such as job shadowing, work exposure, and simulated worksites. Surface candidates' transferable skills and long-term career goals during recruitment to identify future development opportunities.

Recommendation 7.3 Provide accommodations for performance reviews and career development processes

Convergence: Strong **Quality:** Full confidence (83%) **Sources:** 6 independent organizations

Provide accommodations for performance reviews and career development processes, not just for day-to-day work. Confirm that evaluation during probationary periods begins only once accommodations have been provided. Have the employee's supervisor review the accommodation plan before the annual performance review to ensure all tools are in place for productivity. Identify and address any negative consequences to a worker resulting from the organization's delay or failure to provide accommodations. Measure representation of persons with disabilities in promotion and career development initiatives.

Recommendation 7.4 Monitor workforce equity data on hiring, retention, promotion, and turnover

Convergence: Low **Quality:** Full confidence (100%) **Sources:** 3 independent organizations

Collect and analyse workforce demographic data. Compare representation of persons with disabilities to labour market availability and set hiring and promotion targets with specific timelines. Monitor rates of hiring, retention, promotion, and turnover by equity group. Address any gaps identified. Use disability-appropriate metrics such as retention rates, satisfaction scores, psychological safety, and accommodation availability and timelines to measure inclusion efforts.

Recommendation 7.5 Address retention barriers including harassment, instability, and lack of representation

Convergence: Low **Quality:** Full confidence (100%) **Sources:** 3 independent organizations

Address the specific barriers that drive turnover among employees with disabilities. These include harassment, job instability, and lack of representation. Ensure the organization has clear policies on anti-harassment that explicitly cover disability. Build direct supervisors' capacity to understand and respond to employee needs. Secure visible commitment from senior leadership to inclusion at all levels. Connect with other employers to develop your organization's capacity and share practical tools.

For the full evidence base

Each recommendation in this fact sheet is drawn from Chapter 9 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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