

## 25 Tips for Facilitating Disability Inclusion in Your Program

**Tip 1:** Avoid presumptions about the capability of people with disabilities to serve. Ask them what they can do; focus on experience and abilities.

Here are some ways you can do that:

- Share the Department of Labor “I Can” PSA with your network: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BG\\_W7wAe1kw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BG_W7wAe1kw)
- Use the posters and discussion guides in your program for the “I Can” PSA to further the conversation on the capabilities of people with disabilities: <http://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/blog/index.php/i-can-toolkit/>

**Tip 2:** There’re more people with disabilities in your service program than you thought. Read the [ADA definition](#), learn who’s covered.

Learn about how the term “disability” is currently defined and interpreted by law: <https://askjan.org/bulletins/adaaa1.htm#definition>

**Tip 3:** Making disability accommodations is not complex, consult JAN for assistance. The majority cost \$0 and the average actual cost is \$500. #JANatJAN

- The Job Accommodation Network ([www.askjan.org](http://www.askjan.org)) is the free technical assistance provider for CNCS programs, employers, and people with disabilities. You can contact JAN any time with questions about making reasonable disability accommodations in your service program and broader disability questions as well.
- Learn about the low cost and high impact of reasonable accommodation: <https://askjan.org/media/lowcosthighimpact.html>

**Tip 4:** People with disabilities don’t require “special” opportunities, just reasonable accommodations to serve alongside other corps members.

- Take the 15 minute CNCS ecourse on Making Reasonable Accommodations: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/disability-inclusion>

**Tip 5:** The Job Accommodation Network #JANatJAN, provides individualized disability accommodation consulting and tip sheets on most disabilities.

- The Job Accommodation Network (“JAN”) produces fact sheets on the majority of disabilities/ limitations. Check out this resource so you know where you can find helpful information to accommodate service members/volunteers with disabilities: <https://askjan.org/links/atoz.htm>

**Tip 6:** Put members with disabilities on the front line, Department o of Labor research shows the public prefers entities that do over those who don’t.

Look at the Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy page for this finding and for more information: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/Employers.htm>

**Tip 7:** National Service provides pre-employment skill building for members with disabilities...your program’s disability inclusion matters

- This joint letter released by CNCS & DOL’s office of Disability Employment Policy outlines the pre-employment skill building individuals with disabilities gain through national service: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/about/pathway-to-employment>

## Take Action for Disability Inclusion

**Tip 8:** Ask alumni and members with disabilities to share their service experiences #disabilityservicestories; contribute to the narrative

- By sharing their experiences, alumni and current members with disabilities break through preconceived ideas about serving with disabilities. Read these spotlight blogs: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/disability-inclusion>
- Encourage those you know to share their stories via twitter. #disabilityservicestories

**Tip 9:** Those supervising members: take the five short ecourses to ensure preparedness for any disability-related issues during your next service term.

- Take the 15-minute CNCS ecourses on disability inclusion topics in national service programs: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/disability-inclusion>

**Tip 10:** Determine your service program's accessibility: including physical access, electronic communications, accommodation policy.

Prepare your program for making accommodations by creating an accommodation policy. Learn more about this at:

- EEOC's Practical Advice for Drafting and Implementing Reasonable Accommodation Procedures under Executive Order 13164 at [http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/implementing\\_accommodation.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/implementing_accommodation.html)
- Establishing Procedures to Facilitate the Provision of Reasonable Accommodation at [http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/accommodation\\_procedures.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/accommodation_procedures.html)
- Sample policies at <https://askjan.org/links/adapolicies.html>
- Link to draft checklist for physical accessibility: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/disability-inclusion/accessibility-checklist>
- Link to Access board for electronic access standards: <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/communications-and-it>

**Tip 11:** Revisit your program's core service functions. Ensure these focus on core tasks and don't unnecessarily preclude people with disabilities

- People are qualified for your program if they can perform the core functions of the service position with or without reasonable accommodations for a disability. Sometimes programs will include service functions that aren't essential or required for all service members in the program. Pulling the non-essential items from a service position description will mean that only truly essential functions remain. This makes it much easier to determine disability accommodations. For example, a program recently reviewed their corps member functions and realized that they could pull driving a car/having a driver's license. While the program needed to ensure every service team had eligible drivers, this type of requirement may preclude someone who is otherwise able to perform all the service functions but are unable to drive because of a disability. The impact is that more individuals are qualified to become national service members in this program.
  - Check out guidance on reviewing your position descriptions: <https://askjan.org/media/jobdescriptions.html>

**Tip 12:** Review your member selection process and ensure this doesn't screen out people with disabilities.

- All those involved in your selection process can benefit from reading "Disability Etiquette in the Workplace" – a fact sheet about selection process' do's and don'ts on disability. <https://askjan.org/topics/diseti.htm>

**Tip 13:** Share recruitment information with people with disabilities Voc Rehab, Center for Independent Living, College accommodation centers & disability orgs

- Share recruitment information with your local college community with disabilities by sending the office for students with disabilities your recruitment information to circulate (each college names the office differently – look for offices with “disability” in the name or listed in the “Student Affairs” section of the webpage).
- Find and share information with a local Center for Independent Living (a community center for people with disabilities): <http://www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory>
- For a list of Vocational Rehabilitation offices by state, visit <https://askjan.org/cgi-win/TypeQuery.exe?902>.
- For a list of membership-based disability organizations with a national presence, visit the National Disability Leadership Alliance page for organizational links [http://www.disabilityleadership.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=4&Itemid=6](http://www.disabilityleadership.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4&Itemid=6)

**Tip 14:** Foster a relationship with a contact that can connect you with potential candidates with disabilities each recruitment cycle.

- Roster of local Center for Independent Living (a community center for people with disabilities): <http://www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory>
- For a list of Vocational Rehabilitation offices by state, visit <https://askjan.org/cgi-win/TypeQuery.exe?902>.

**Tip 15:** Remember to ask candidates if they need accommodations during member selection interactions and interviews.

- Share the disability do’s and don’ts for interviewing with those handling your process: <https://askjan.org/job/dosint.htm>

**Tip 16:** Front-load making accommodations: Add contact info for accommodations point person to your offer letter. Repeat at in-person training.

- The first moment supervisors can discuss disability accommodations is when offering a service position. By integrating the contact person for arranging accommodations in your program in your offer letter/email, you are ensuring you have the longest possible window of time to coordinate disability accommodations before the term begins. Reiterating the accommodation process at in-person training is helpful for those who have yet to disclose their disabilities.

**Tip 17:** Making accommodations? Start out by discussing what’s worked well in similar circumstances with your members with disabilities.

- Those with disabilities are the most knowledgeable about their unique limitations, starting your accommodation dialogue with them will jumpstart making accommodations. Take the 15 minute ecourse on Making Reasonable Accommodations: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/disability-inclusion>

**Tip 18:** Will the accommodation work? Try an original accommodation plan for a set period. Do a check-in with the member and improve as needed.

- Take the 15 minute ecourse on Making Reasonable Accommodations: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/disability-inclusion>

**Tip 19:** Create staffing & service teams with members with disabilities fully integrated to serve alongside those without disabilities.

- Learn how disability integration was a key goal of the Americans with Disabilities Act by reading about the Act’s origins: <https://askjan.org/media/adahandbook/PREAMBLE.html>

**Tip 20:** Educate fellow grantees by sharing your disability inclusion strategies & success stories on social media using #Service4All and #GranteeInclusionStrategy and email them to [disability@cns.gov](mailto:disability@cns.gov).

**Tip 21:** Understand & communicate to members: SSI isn't impacted by living allowance - SSDI is - unless you are serving with VISTA (see the HEARTH Act).

- Use the Dear Colleague letter CNCS & DOL issued that addresses income exclusions for those on disability benefits as well as the other resources at the bottom of this letter: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/about/pathway-to-employment>

**Tip 22:** Match members with disabilities (and those without) with a mentor who can offer support, guidance and problem-solve. Mentors increase effectiveness.

- Understand the connection between successful outcomes and mentorship for people with disabilities by checking out these resources: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/cultivate.htm>

**Tip 23:** If things aren't running smoothly, include making (or tweaking) reasonable accommodations in your solution plan.

- Recognize that someone with a disability who isn't accommodated properly may not perform to their full potential. There may be members in your program who have not disclosed disabilities because of fear, stigma or lack of understanding the process. Be a supportive supervisor and before you discipline a member, consider asking if there was something they needed to perform better. Approaching a struggling member with resources may be the positive change needed to bring out their best and avoid future issues.

**Tip 24:** Track disability inclusion: encourage all members to complete a NEW optional disability question on exit surveys.

**Tip 25:** Service provides transferrable pre-employment experience. Share transition resources with the NEW ENOS toolkit for Alumni with disabilities.

- For more information, <https://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/employers-national-service/alumni/employment-and-alumni-disabilities>