

Inclusive Employer Handbook: Workplace Accessibility Learner’s Guide

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Overview

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) supports employers in creating workplaces that are diverse and inclusive of employees with disabilities. One way OOD does this is through providing consultations and training on Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), worksite accessibility, reasonable accommodations, and disability inclusion. This learner's guide is a reference companion for the webinar titled "Workplace Accessibility" which is the fourth in the five-part series "Inclusive Employer Handbook".

The inspiration for this series comes from the criteria used in the Governor's Inclusive Employer Award. Moments after taking the oath of office, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed Executive Order 2019-03D, which established Ohio as a Disability Inclusion State and a Model Employer of Individuals with Disabilities. To reinforce his commitment to Ohioans with disabilities, H.B. (House Bill) 110 included presenting the Governor's Inclusive Employer Award during October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) to employers who meet the criteria for having a workplace inclusive of individuals with disabilities. OOD determined the criteria for the award in alignment with its Inclusive Employer Toolkit: Inclusive Workplace; Recruiting, Hiring, and Supporting Employees; Workplace Accommodations; and Workplace Accessibility.

Creating a workplace that is accessible for as many people as possible can help employers attract qualified candidates, increase productivity on the job, retain and advance experienced employees, ensure important information is conveyed, and expand their customer base. Employers who are intentional about creating an accessible hiring process and workplace can foster an inclusive workplace culture. In this fourth session of the handbook, these topics about workplace accessibility will be addressed:

- Define Accessibility,
- Know the Accessibility Guidelines,
- Assess the Work Environment,
- Remain Current with Accessibility,
- Utilize a Reasonable Accommodation Statement,
- Offer Accommodations for All,
- Provide Training, and
- Consider a Centralized Fund.

The information included is for educational purposes, is not an exhaustive list, and is not intended as legal advice.

Define Accessibility

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in four adults in the United States (US) has a disability. Based on these numbers, employers likely have employees with disabilities in the hiring process and the workplace, whether they know it or not. These statistics underpin the importance of creating policies and procedures to ensure accessibility of all aspects of the hiring process and the workplace.

Employers who successfully foster cultures that are inclusive of disability integrate accessibility into their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) goals. According to www.dictionary.com accessibility is:

- “the quality of being easy to approach, reach, enter, speak with, use, or understand”
- “the quality of being usable, reachable, obtainable, etc.”
- “the quality of being suitable or adaptable for use by people with disabilities.”

The Federal government's strategic plan to advance “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility” (DEIA) in the Federal workforce defines accessibility as:

- “The design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them. Accessibility includes the provision of accommodations and modifications to ensure equal access to employment and participation in activities for people with disabilities, the reduction or elimination of physical and attitudinal barriers to equitable opportunities, a commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities can independently access every outward-facing and internal activity or electronic space, and the pursuit of best practices such as universal design.”

Accessibility is comprehensive of the entire workplace and includes the built environment, the digital environment, and communications. It is an ongoing proactive journey that addresses all business operations, including additions, changes, and maintenance of the built and digital environments and communications. Accessibility often benefits everyone, including people with disabilities, helping to make everyone feel more comfortable and included in the workplace.

Fostering an accessible workplace includes creating policies and/or procedures that address knowing the accessibility guidelines, assessing the work environment, remaining current, utilizing a reasonable accommodation (RA) statement, offering accommodations for all, providing training, and considering a centralized fund. Each of these is discussed in detail in their own section of this learner’s guide.

OOD Resource:

For more information on how OOD can support employers at no cost visit the “**Workplace Accessibility**” page of the Inclusive Employer Toolkit on the Employers’ page of OOD’s [website](#).

Know the Accessibility Guidelines

An accessible environment can lead to equity for qualified individuals with disabilities competing for open positions, excelling in job performance, and advancing in their careers. Creating and maintaining an accessible workplace begins with knowing the current accessibility guidelines and best practices. Addressing these in policies and procedures can serve as a starting point for making the workplace accessible for as many people as possible. The aspects of the workplace addressed in this learner’s guide include the built environment, the digital environment, and communications.

Built Environment

Employers utilize the physical built environment for the hiring process, performing work, and accessing information. This environment includes components like parking, entrances and exits, accessible routes,

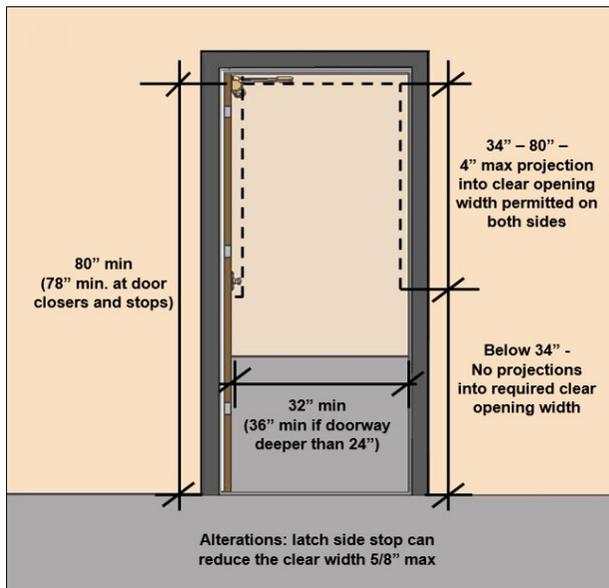
common areas, work areas and surfaces, signs, and emergency systems. Accessibility standards for the built environment are provided by entities like the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the US Access Board.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) provides accessibility standards for Titles II and III of the ADA called the “2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design”, also known as the “Standards.” The Standards include minimum requirements for new construction and major alterations that apply to “State and local government facilities, public accommodations, and commercial facilities.” The Standards are regulated and enforced with the intention that these facilities and accommodations “be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.” Employers can review the Standards for questions related to their responsibilities under Titles II or III of the ADA.

From an employment perspective, the Standards are a good place to start when addressing the accessibility of the built environment. The US Access Board has a “Guide to the ADA Accessibility Standards” with illustrations that describe some of the common technical guidelines from the Standards. The Standards and the guide from the Access Board are helpful resources for employers who are reviewing their workplaces for accessibility:

- “2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design” on the DOJ [website](#).
- “Guide to the ADA Accessibility Standards” on the US Access Board [website](#).

Here is an example of an illustration from the US Access Board for accessibility of a door:



According to responses received for the Governor’s Inclusive Employer Award application, one employer reported they design new facilities with accessibility in mind.

Digital Environment

Employers utilize the digital environment for the hiring process, performing work, and accessing information. This environment includes components like websites and intranets, virtual platforms and multimedia, and online forms and documents. Accessibility standards for the digital environment are provided by entities like the World Wide Web Consortium’s (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), the

Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology (PEAT), Disability:IN, Minnesota IT Services, Microsoft, the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN), DOJ, and the U.S. General Services Administration's (GSA) Digital.gov website.

When creating digital accessibility for web content, the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) provide a "single shared standard for web content accessibility that meets the needs of individuals, organizations, and governments internationally." WCAG is developed through W3C's WAI. W3C's website offers a comprehensive overview of WCAG along with a free online course, tips, and tutorials.

When reviewing the accessibility of a virtual platform and how to conduct workplace activities in an accessible way, PEAT offers ways to research various platforms and a checklist of how to conduct accessible meetings and presentations virtually. Disability:IN offers resources for accessible conferencing technologies and how to make virtual meetings inclusive. These resources include information on providing live captioning and sign language interpretation in the virtual environment.

When reviewing the accessibility of multimedia, online forms, and documents, a variety of resources are helpful. PEAT has a resource for creating accessible documents, virtual presentations, events, social media, emails, and videos. The State of Minnesota's IT Services has a resource which provides training and best practices for making documents, meetings, webinars, videos, social media, and websites accessible. Disability:IN has a resource which provides resources for conferences and meetings, social media and email, and new technologies and services. Microsoft has an Accessibility Checker built into its Microsoft 365 applications that identifies accessibility problems and provides remedies with instructions to resolve these barriers.

The DOJ provides guidance on web accessibility related to the ADA for state and local governments and businesses open to the public. This guidance addresses why accessibility matters, and shares examples of barriers, when web content is required to be accessible under the ADA, how to make websites accessible, and helpful resources. Employers can review the guidance for questions related to their responsibilities under Titles II or III of the ADA.

The guidance is helpful for employers who are reviewing their workplace for digital accessibility. Additional resources provide a comprehensive overview of the importance of accessibility in the digital environment and the many ways this impacts the workplace. EARN provides a resource which addresses the accessibility of technology used when recruiting, hiring, retaining, and advancing employees with disabilities. GSA's Digital.gov website provides a resource which addresses federal laws pertaining to digital accessibility, inclusive design, disability awareness, and links to additional guidance.

Here are the resources discussed for digital accessibility guidelines and best practices:

- "W3C Accessibility Standards Overview" on the W3C WAI [website](#)
- "How to Pick an Accessible Virtual Meeting Platform" on the PEAT [website](#)
- "Checklist for an Accessible Virtual Meeting & Presentation" on the PEAT [website](#)
- "COVID-19 Response: Digital Accessibility and Other Best Practices for Remote Work" on the Disability:IN [website](#).
- "Digital Accessibility Basics" on the PEAT [website](#).
- "The Office of Accessibility" on the Minnesota IT Services [website](#).

- “Accessibility Video Training – Making Your Content Accessible” on the Microsoft support [website](#).
- “Make Your Content Accessible to Everyone with the Accessibility Checker” on the Microsoft support [website](#).
- “Technological Accessibility” on the EARN [website](#).
- “Guidance on Web Accessibility and the ADA” on the DOJ [website](#).
- “An Introduction to Accessibility” on GSA’s Digital.gov [website](#).

According to responses received for the Governor’s Inclusive Employer Award application, one employer reported they have a checklist for publishing digital content that includes alternative text (alt text).

Communications

Employers utilize communications during the hiring process, with performing work, and to share information. Communications can be direct and indirect and include items like job postings, websites and intranets, emails, social media, training, policies, forms, and documents. Some ways to create inclusive and accessible communications are addressed in the accessibility guidelines and best practices in the built environment and digital environment sections of this learner’s guide. In addition, best practices are available from entities like the DOJ, National Deaf Center (NDC), Job Accommodation Network (JAN), Missouri School for the Blind, Communication Disabilities Access Canada (CDAC), and OOD.

The DOJ provides regulations under Titles II and III of the ADA for effective communications with people with communication disabilities. These regulations address an overview of a covered entity’s responsibilities, auxiliary aids and services, and effective communication provisions. In addition, employers can review the Standards for questions related to their responsibilities under Titles II or III of the ADA related to accessibility of communications in the built environment. Communications guidelines addressed in the Standards include fire alarm systems, signs, telephones, detectable warnings, and assistive listening systems. This guidance is helpful for employers who are reviewing their workplace communications in the built environment.

When communicating with individuals who have various disabilities, being informed of best practices helps to ensure successful communications.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing: NDC offers a tip sheet which addresses the variety of ways individuals with hearing disabilities communicate, how the environment impacts communication, tips for communicating, and effective communications in large groups. JAN offers a resource with tips for communicating by phone.

Blind or Low Vision: the Missouri School for the Blind offers a resource on how to interact with a person who has a visual disability which addresses direct communications.

Intellectual Disabilities: JAN offers a resource with communication tips for communicating with individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Speech-Language Disabilities: CDAC offers communications tips for interacting with individuals with speech-language disabilities that includes direct communications, tips for when a picture board or

communication device is being used, tips for when either party has difficulty understanding the other, and when a communication assistant is present.

Here are the resources discussed for communications accessibility guidelines and best practices:

- “Effective Communication” on the ADA [website](#).
- “Communicating with Deaf Individuals” on the NDC [website](#).
- “Communication Tips for Working with Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities” on the JAN [website](#).
- “How to Interact with a Person Who is Visually Impaired” on the Missouri School for the Blind’s [website](#).
- “Communication Tips” on the CDAC [website](#).
- “Accessible Communications in the Workplace” on the OOD [website](#).

According to responses received for the Governor’s Inclusive Employer Award application, one employer reported they have a telecommunications device for the deaf available to their employees in case an interpreter is not available.

From an overall accessibility standpoint, JAN offers an accessibility resource on their [website](#) which addresses guidance for virtual and in-person events, facilities, general, products and devices, recruiting and hiring, telework and websites.

NOTE: Employers with responsibilities under Title I of the ADA to provide reasonable accommodations likely also have responsibilities under Titles II or III. Titles II and III address the public accessing such things as goods, services, and programs. Creating an accessible environment under Titles II or III does not negate providing a reasonable accommodation under Title I when needed.

OOD Resource:

For more information on employers’ responsibilities to provide reasonable accommodations, view OOD’s on-demand webinar **“The Employers’ ADA Handbook Session 2: Reasonable Accommodations and Undue Hardship”** on the employer’s page of the OOD [website](#).

Assess the Work Environment

Employers can progress with creating accessible workplaces by assessing the status of their current environment. This helps employers identify where they are and prioritize next steps. One way to ensure progress with accessibility remains a priority is to include a requirement for assessing accessibility in policies and procedures. Resources for assessments are available for the built and digital environments from entities like the New England ADA Center, PEAT, Web Accessibility In Mind (WebAIM), and W3C’s WAI.

Built Environment

The New England ADA Center has created a checklist based on the Standards for the built environment mentioned in the previous section. The checklist addresses responsibilities under Titles II and III of the ADA and includes these priority areas: approach and entrance, access to goods and services, toilet rooms, and additional access for drinking fountains, public telephones, and fire alarms. This checklist

provides employers with a starting point to assess the built environment. For employers with responsibilities under Title I of the ADA to provide reasonable accommodations, it is important to know that what an applicant or employee with a disability needs for accessibility of the built environment may at times be greater than the minimum requirements in the Standards. When an employer receives a request from an applicant or employee with a disability regarding accessibility of the built environment, the employer should begin the interactive process promptly to collaborate with the individual and identify an effective solution.

Here are the resources discussed for assessments of the built environment:

- “ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities” on the New England ADA Center’s [website](#).

Digital Environment

PEAT offers employers digital accessibility toolkits to assess and create accessible digital environments, such as TalentWorks, which is a no-cost tool for employers to ensure their online job applications and eRecruiting technologies are accessible, and TechCheck, which is a short assessment that gives employers a “snapshot” of their accessibility practices, the goals they wish to achieve, and steps to take to achieve them.

WebAIM has several resources for employers to assess the digital environment, including a reference list for testing web content for accessibility through software, checklists, a screen reader, and scans; ways to assess for screen reader technologies; a contrast and font checker; and a Web Accessibility Evaluation (WAVE) tool.

W3C’s WAI offers a resource for completing a first review of website accessibility through their tool called Easy Checks.

Here are the resources discussed for assessments of the digital environment:

- “Digital Accessibility Toolkits” on PEAT’s [website](#).
- “TalentWorks” on PEAT’s [website](#).
- “Welcome to TechCheck” on PEAT’s [website](#).
- “Articles” on WebAIM’s [website](#).
- “Contrast Checker” on WebAIM’s [website](#).
- “Quick Reference” on WebAIM’s [website](#).
- “Typefaces and Fonts” on WebAIM’s [website](#).
- “WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool” on WebAIM’s [website](#).
- “Easy Checks – A First Review of Web Accessibility” on W3C’s WAI [website](#).

OOD Resource:

For more information on best practices for the digital and virtual environment, view OOD’s on-demand webinar “**Digital Accessibility and Accommodations**” on the employer’s page of the OOD [website](#).

Remain Current with Accessibility

Fostering an inclusive and accessible workplace requires ongoing effort. Beyond knowing the accessibility guidelines and assessing work environments, inclusive employers are intentional about remaining current with accessibility. Employers can prioritize this by creating a policy and/or procedures to take action to identify the most recent guidelines and best practices. To remain current, employers can periodically review available guidance, participate in external training, and consult with subject matter experts. Several organizations offer newsletters, webinars, informational resources, conferences, networking opportunities, and consults related to workplace accessibility and inclusion. Here are resources to consider:

- Great Lakes ADA Center is a part of the ADA National Network and serves the Ohio region. This center offers “information, materials, technical assistance and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).” Employers may view additional information, register for webinars, and sign up for their newsletter on their [website](#).
- The DOJ’s ADA [website](#) offers “information and technical assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act.” Their website includes the Standards, a guide to the Standards, and the option to sign up for email updates.
- The W3C WAI [website](#) offers information on the current and upcoming WCAG standards for accessible websites, training resources, and an option to receive news via email.
- PEAT’s [website](#) offers employer toolkits for assessing the work environment, a resource library, and a newsletter.
- EARN’s [website](#) offers a framework for building a disability-inclusive organization which includes accessible information and communication technology, training courses and webinars, a resource library, and an option to subscribe for news and updates.
- Disability:IN’s [website](#) offers a resource library, webinars, the Disability Equality Index (DEI) benchmarking assessment tool, and the option to subscribe for email updates. In addition, this organization hosts an annual conference for employers to come together to participate in educational sessions, sharing best practices, and networking.
- JAN’s [website](#) offers extensive resources for employers on navigating their responsibilities under Title I of the ADA, templates for policies and documentation, educational webinars, consultations with subject matter experts, and a newsletter.
- An employer may contact their local OOD Business Relations Specialist (BRS) to discuss the services OOD offers to employers at no cost, such as a worksite accessibility consultation. This consultation is a combined meeting with the employer, the BRS, and OOD’s Worksite Accessibility Specialist to discuss the employer’s questions and concerns pertaining to accessibility in the workplace. The intention is to address the employer’s goal by providing resources, information, and ideas to support the employer in making decisions about next steps with making the workplace more accessible. The consultation can occur over the phone, through a virtual call, or in-person when needed.
- OOD’s [website](#) offers an Employers page with access to an Inclusive Employer Toolkit, an on-demand library of webinars on a variety of topics related to inclusion and accessibility, fact sheets, and worksite accessibility services.

OOD Resource:

For more information on how OOD can support your efforts to remain current with accessibility in the workplace, review OOD's "**Worksite Accessibility Services**" on the employer's page of the OOD [website](#).

Utilize a Reasonable Accommodation Statement

Creating an accessible work environment may result in a workplace culture where everyone can participate, and everyone feels included. However, barriers may remain in the hiring process, in performing work, and in accessing the benefits of employment. Because of this, a reasonable accommodation statement should be included in key areas.

A reasonable accommodation statement invites an individual with a disability to request an accommodation, when needed, and provides contact information that informs the individual how to make the request. Employers are permitted under Title I of the ADA to create their own reasonable accommodation statement. Some employers may choose to combine this statement with their equal opportunity (EO) statement to communicate both being a disability-inclusive employer and a commitment to providing reasonable accommodations.

OOD Resource:

For more information on best practices for reasonable accommodation statements, view session one of OOD's Inclusive Employer Handbook webinar series "**Inclusive Workplace**" on the employer's page of the OOD [website](#).

Offer Accommodations for All

To further support an inclusive workplace that meets the needs of all employees, employers may consider creating a policy and/or procedures to provide certain accommodations for all employees when requested. This allows employers to create a list of items that can be provided quickly without requiring an individual to disclose a disability and participate in the formal reasonable accommodation process. A preapproved list of items may include things like ergonomic keyboards and mice, ergonomic chairs, sit/stand workstations, live captioning for large meetings and presentations, noise cancelling earbuds, and flexible schedules.

When employers provide accommodations for all, it's a best practice to inform all employees so they know these items are available for them if needed.

According to responses received for the Governor's Inclusive Employer Award application, one employer reported they have standing desks available for any employee who requests one and another employer indicated that when they distribute books for training purposes, employees can choose if they would like a physical copy, audio book, or digital copy.

OOD Resource:

For more information on best practices for accommodations, view OOD's Inclusive Employer Toolkit section "**Workplace Accommodations**" on the employer's page of the OOD [website](#).

Provide Training

One important way to ensure an accessible workplace is to make accessibility a priority for all employees when planning events, creating communications and invitations, designing physical and digital workspaces, and starting projects. This ensures accessibility is addressed from the onset and is not an afterthought. Here are some examples:

- Consider accessibility when planning events in onsite and offsite locations and facilities,
- Check the accessibility of documents before publishing and distributing,
- Include a reasonable accommodation statement in emails to interviews and onboarding, and
- Make sure to consider accessibility in the beginning stages of new projects.

To support all employees in successfully implementing accessibility, provide training on the importance of inclusion in the workplace, disability basics and common workplace barriers, ways to make the built environment accessible, how to conduct accessible virtual meetings, and how to create accessible documents. Resources for best practices related to training are available for employers to consider from entities like PEAT, Minnesota IT Services, Microsoft, and OOD.

PEAT offers staff training resources on its [website](#) with ideas for training in disability inclusion, creating accessible documents, and staff training for various roles.

Minnesota IT services offers training on its [website](#) for making Microsoft Word documents accessible and includes resources for training, documents, maps, meetings, multimedia, social media, web and apps on their "Why Accessibility Matters" [webpage](#).

Microsoft offers an accessibility fundamentals course on their documentation [webpage](#) which provides an introduction to disability and accessibility, instruction on Microsoft's accessibility features and tools, ways to create accessible content with Microsoft 365, and how to create digital accessibility. Microsoft offers information about its free, built-in Accessibility Checker on its support [webpage](#) which addresses a set of rules that identify accessibility issues, how and why to fix accessibility issues, and the limitations of this tool.

OOD's team of Business Relations Specialists (BRSs) provide a variety of disability awareness training offerings which can be customized to support employers in creating workplace cultures that are diverse and inclusive of individuals with disabilities. For example, OOD offers Disability Awareness training that is designed for employers and employees to examine personal attitudes and biases toward individuals with disabilities. OOD also offers Disability Etiquette training which defines disability, includes practical examples of respectful interactions with people with disabilities, and addresses proper language usage. Employers can find additional information about Disability Education Resources on OOD's [website](#).

OOD Resource:

For more information to support training, view OOD’s “**Accessible Communications in the Workplace**” fact sheets on the employer’s page of the OOD [website](#).

Consider a Centralized Fund

The Federal government’s strategic plan to advance DEIA in the Federal workforce includes an accessibility roadmap which suggests Federal employers evaluate the need for a centralized fund to both improve accessibility and provide accommodations. In the third session of the Inclusive Employer Handbook: Workplace Accommodations, creating a centralized accommodation fund was discussed for purchasing reasonable accommodations.

Funding a budget for workplace accessibility will be unique for each employer. Employers who hire people with disabilities and/or remove barriers to improve the physical accessibility of their work environments may be eligible for tax credits and deductions, such as the Disabled Access Credit, the Barrier Removal Tax Deduction, and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. Resources with more information on these tax benefits are included in the OOD Resource box at the end of this section.

Employers often have budgets for purchasing technology to support their organization’s operations. A best practice is to ensure the procurement process addresses accessibility from the start. This could include creating a policy and/or procedures that requires employees who are responsible for making these purchases to include accessibility as a core component of the decision-making process. Resources for best practices related to procuring accessible technology are available for employers to consider from entities like Disability:IN and PEAT.

The Disability:IN organization offers a toolkit on their [website](#) for procuring accessible technology. This toolkit addresses why digital accessibility matters, policies, inventory, culture, requirements, evaluating bids, training, and more. In addition, Disability:IN offers a resource on their [website](#) which addresses purchasing virtual platforms that are accessible for everyone. This resource addresses questions to ask vendors, sample contract language, capabilities for captioning and sign language interpretation, accessibility and usability testing, and more.

PEAT offers a guide for purchasing accessible technology on their [website](#). Their eight-step process addresses setting priorities, preparing to buy, issuing solicitation, evaluating proposals, negotiating contracts, testing and validation, and reviewing.

According to responses received for the Governor’s Inclusive Employer Award application, one employer reported their Information Technology department utilizes an accessibility checklist when reviewing new products. The checklist evaluates programs for screen reader compatibility, keyboard compatibility, closed captioning, and other elements.

OOD Resource:

For more information on tax benefits, view session four of OOD's **"The Employers' ADA Handbook: Resources and Funding"** on the employer's page of the OOD [website](#) or visit OOD's Inclusive Employer Toolkit's [webpage](#) on Employer Tax Incentives.

Conclusion

OOD appreciates your interest in identifying solutions and resources to support a workplace that is diverse and inclusive of employees with disabilities. Each employee with a disability, each employer, and each workplace is unique and because of this, the effective strategy to create a work environment that is accessible and inclusive will be unique. We hope the information shared in this learner's guide and webinar are helpful in supporting your efforts.

Resources

Overview

- Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion. "[Creating an Accessible and Welcoming Workplace](#)"
- Make it. "[Why Technology Accessibility is Key for Disability Inclusion at Work](#)"
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[Employer Awards](#)"
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[Inclusive Employer Toolkit](#)"

Define Accessibility

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "[Disability Impacts All of Us](#)"
- Dictionary. "[Accessibility](#)"
- Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion. "[Attitudinal Awareness](#)"
- Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion. "[Creating an Accessible and Welcoming Workplace](#)"
- Make It. "[77% of Workers with Disabilities Say Their Employer Has Done a Better Job Supporting Them Since the Pandemic Started](#)"
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[Workplace Accessibility](#)"
- The White House. "[Government-wide Strategic Plan to Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce](#)"

Know the Accessibility Guidelines

- ADA. "[Effective Communication](#)"
- Department of Justice. "[Guidance on Web Accessibility and the ADA](#)"
- US General Services Administration's Digital.gov. "[An Introduction to Accessibility](#)"
- Disability:IN. "[COVID-19 Response: Digital Accessibility and Other Best Practices for Remote Work](#)"
- Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion. "[Technological Accessibility](#)"
- Job Accommodation Network. "[Accessibility](#)"
- Job Accommodation Network. "[Communicate](#)"

- Job Accommodation Network. "[Physical Accessibility in the Workplace](#)"
- Microsoft. "[Accessibility Video Training – Making Your Content Accessible](#)"
- Microsoft. "[Make Your Content Accessible to Everyone with the Accessibility Checker](#)"
- Minnesota IT Services. "[The Office of Accessibility](#)"
- Missouri School for the Blind. "[How to Interact with A Person Who is Visually Impaired](#)"
- National Deaf Center. "[Communicating with Deaf Individuals](#)"
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[Accessible Communications in the Workplace](#)"
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[The Employers' ADA Handbook](#)"
- Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology. "[Checklist for an Accessible Virtual Meeting & Presentation](#)"
- Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology. "[Digital Accessibility Basics](#)"
- Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology. "[How to Pick an Accessible Virtual Meeting Platform](#)"
- W3C Web Accessibility Initiative. "[W3C Accessibility Standards Overview](#)"
- W3C Web Accessibility Initiative. "[Making the Web Accessible](#)"

Assess the Work Environment

- New England ADA Center. "[ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities](#)"
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[Digital Accessibility and Accommodations](#)"
- Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology. "[Digital Accessibility Toolkits](#)"
- Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology. "[TalentWorks](#)"
- Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology. "[Welcome to TechCheck](#)"
- W3C Web Accessibility Initiative. "[Easy Checks – A First Review of Web Accessibility](#)"
- Web Accessibility In Mind. "[Articles](#)"
- Web Accessibility In Mind. "[Contrast Checker](#)"
- Web Accessibility In Mind. "[Quick Reference](#)"
- Web Accessibility In Mind. "[Typefaces and Fonts](#)"
- Web Accessibility In Mind. "[WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool](#)"

Remain Current with Accessibility

- Department of Justice. "[Information and Technical Assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)"
- Disability:IN. "[Homepage](#)"
- Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion. "[Looking to recruit, hire, retain and advance qualified people with disabilities?](#)"
- Great Lakes ADA Center. "[Homepage](#)"
- Job Accommodation Network. "[Homepage](#)"
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[Information for Employers](#)"
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[Worksite Accessibility Services](#)"
- Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology. "[Spark Inclusion in Your Organization](#)"
- W3C Web Accessibility Initiative. "[Making the Web Accessible](#)"

Utilize a Reasonable Accommodation Statement

- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[Digital Accessibility and Accommodations](#)"

- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[Inclusive Employer Handbook](#)"

Offer Accommodations for All

- Job Accommodation Network. "[The JAN Workplace Accommodation Toolkit](#)"

Provide Training

- Microsoft. "[Accessibility Fundamentals](#)"
- Microsoft. "[Rules for the Accessibility Checker](#)"
- Minnesota IT Services. "[Accessible Word Document Training](#)"
- Minnesota IT Services. "[The Office of Accessibility](#)"
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[Accessible Communications in the Workplace](#)"
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[Disability Education Resources](#)"
- Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology. "[Staff Training Resources](#)"
- The White House. "[Government-wide Strategic Plan to Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce](#)"

Consider a Centralized Fund

- Disability:IN. "[Accessible Technology Procurement Toolkit](#)"
- Disability:IN. "[Purchasing and Licensing Accessible Video Conferencing Platforms that Work for Everyone](#)"
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[Employer Tax Incentives](#)"
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[Inclusive Employer Handbook](#)"
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[The Employers' ADA Handbook](#)"
- The White House. "[Government-wide Strategic Plan to Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce](#)"

OOD's Business Relations Team – see map on final two pages

- **Jon Hackathorn, Manager, Ohio Vocational Apprentice Program and State of Ohio Agencies**
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- **Cynthia L. Crews, Business Relations Specialist in Southwest Ohio**
 - **Phone:** 513-309-5140
 - **Email:** cynthia.crews@ood.ohio.gov
 - **Counties served:** Adams, Brown, Butler, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Darke, Fayette, Greene, Hamilton, Highland, Logan, Madison, Miami, Montgomery, Preble, Shelby, Union, and Warren
 - **Career Development Specialist:** Dustin Schwab
 - **Colleges/Universities served:** Central State University, Miami University, University of Cincinnati, Wilberforce University, and Wright State University
- **Michael Hoag, Business Relations Specialist in Northeast Ohio**
 - **Phone:** 216-210-7584
 - **Email:** michael.hoag@ood.ohio.gov
 - **Counties served:** Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Medina, Portage, and Summit
 - **Career Development Specialist:** Kris Wray
 - **Colleges/Universities served:** Cuyahoga Community College, Kent State University, and The University of Akron
- **Kelly Jordan, Business Relations Specialist in Southeast Ohio**
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 - **Email:** kelly.jordan@ood.ohio.gov
 - **Counties served:** Athens, Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Gallia, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Vinton, and Washington
 - **Career Development Specialist:** Dustin Schwab
 - **Colleges/Universities served:** Columbus State Community College, Ohio University, and The Ohio State University
- **Ron Klonowski, Business Relations Specialist in East Central Ohio**
 - **Phone:** 330-312-4051
 - **Email:** ronald.klonowski@ood.ohio.gov
 - **Counties served:** Ashland, Belmont, Carroll, Columbiana, Coshocton, Crawford, Guernsey, Harrison, Holmes, Jefferson, Knox, Licking, Mahoning, Morrow, Muskingum, Noble, Richland, Stark, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, and Wayne
 - **Career Development Specialist:** Dustin Schwab, Kris Wray
 - **Colleges/Universities served:** Central Ohio Technical College, Stark State College, and Youngstown State University
- **Jill Simpson, Business Relations Specialist in Northwest Ohio**
 - **Phone:** 419-277-4894
 - **Email:** jill.simpson@ood.ohio.gov
 - **Counties served:** Allen, Auglaize, Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Huron, Lorain, Lucas, Marion, Mercer, Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Sandusky, Seneca, Van Wert, Williams, Wood, and Wyandot
 - **Career Development Specialist:** Kris Wray
 - **Colleges/Universities served:** Bowling Green State University, Lorain County Community College, and The University of Toledo

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BUSINESS RELATIONS SERVICES MAP



Business Relations and Career Development Specialists Map

Business Relations and Career Development Specialists:

Northeast Area

Michael Hoag - BRS
 Kris Wray - CDS
 * Cuyahoga Community College
 * Kent State University
 * The University of Akron

Northwest Area

Jill Simpson - BRS
 Kris Wray - CDS
 * Bowling Green State University
 * Lorain County Community College
 * The University of Toledo

Southeast Area

Kelly Jordan - BRS
 Dustin Schwab - CDS
 * Columbus State Community College
 * Ohio University
 * The Ohio State University

Southwest Area

Cynthia Crews - BRS
 Dustin Schwab - CDS
 * Central State University
 * Miami University
 * University of Cincinnati
 * Wilberforce University
 * Wright State University

East Central Area

Ronald Klonowski - BRS
 Kris Wray - CDS
 * Stark State College
 * Youngstown State University
 Dustin Schwab - CDS
 * Central Ohio Technical College

 Colleges/ Universities

