



Ontario
Disability
Employment
Network

Réseau ontarien
d'aide à l'emploi
pour les personnes
handicapées

Guide to Accessible eRecruiting





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This step-by-step guide will aid your business in the review and enhancements of your accessible online recruiting, interviewing and onboarding processes, to make your eRecruiting efforts successful.

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered many of the ways we interact with one another. With the need for physical distancing, businesses are moving their work and meetings online. This means that for many, the hiring process has or will move online.

With this change, it is essential that online communications, including application portals, interviews and onboarding processes, are made accessible.

The way current systems are designed and built can make it hard — and sometimes impossible — for businesses to eRecruit successfully. When you consider that people who have a disability are the world's largest minority —15% of the global population - ensuring your platforms and processes are accessible is very important.

Most candidates discover job openings through online searches. This is benefiting employers and job seekers alike. If your business's online job listings are not accessible, however, valuable candidates who have a disability may drop out and continue their job searches elsewhere. You may be missing out on vast talent pool in Canada.

2018 Federal statistics indicate that 22% of Canadians identify as a person who has a disability. That is almost one in four Canadians.

If your business's online job listings are not accessible, valuable candidates who have a disability may be forced to drop out and continue their job searches elsewhere.

The Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN) has compiled information from a variety of sources to help you assess and improve your eRecruiting processes. For more information on ODEN, [please visit our website](#) or [email us](#).

1.0 Accessible Job Postings

Many job seekers, including those who have a disability, look for jobs online. You can make your online job postings accessible for people who use computers differently by ensuring your business's website complies with [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0 web accessibility standards for layout and content](#). Businesses that have accessible websites will ensure more qualified candidates can find out about and apply for positions.

Distinguish between essential and non-essential responsibilities

When listing qualifications, you should list essential requirements separately from non-essential requirements. People can better determine whether a job is the right fit for them if they know which skills:

- They must have
- Might be helpful but are not necessary

For instance, many postings ask that candidates be “team players” — an essential skill for some jobs but not others.

- This requirement could deter businesses from hiring candidates who have all the core skills a posting asks for, but have difficulty interpreting social cues.

Another example: Postings requiring each candidate to have a valid driver's licence for jobs involving travel.

- This requirement means employers miss the chance to interview candidates who don't drive but who are experienced at making alternative travel arrangements.

Clarity about which job skills are essential will net you an applicant pool that is larger, more diverse and more used to innovating and finding creative solutions.

[Learn more here on how to create highly effective job postings](#)



Accessible job postings and descriptions

Make sure your job postings and descriptions are written in [plain language](#). This doesn't mean that you are oversimplifying or leaning out information, it actually means you are making critical information more accessible and readable for everyone. When you write plainly, you increase the chances that people will be able to find, read, and understand your message no matter what device they are using.

Once you have the content ready ensure that the postings and job descriptions are formatted accessibly in Microsoft Word or as an accessible PDF. Learn more here about [creating accessible Microsoft Word documents](#) and [creating accessible Adobe PDF documents](#).

Online Talent Recruitment System

If your online talent-management system or job portal asks users to upload their resumés, be sure to consider the accessibility implications. Some systems and job portals can be difficult for users to navigate. Some systems that make users reformat their resumés may time out before applicants can finish. Additional issues may include the inability to save and spell-check a reformatted resumé. This can challenge users who need more time. These issues are common problems for any job applicant. Solutions include:

- Providing an alternative way to submitting a resumé for those who may have technical difficulties.
- Ensuring your online system is easy to navigate, and compatible with assistive technology (AT) devices, such as screen readers.
- Posting clear instructions for how to upload resumés. Explain which resumé formats you accept and which ones you don't.
- Making sure there is enough time...Ask users if they need more time with a prompt or provide a way for them to disable the timeout feature.
- Providing spelling and grammar tools to help applicants make sure their resumés don't have errors that could result in their application being discarded immediately, regardless of their qualifications.
- Allowing applicants to save their resumés.
- Providing confirmation feedback that the person's resumé was uploaded successfully.

2.0 Accessible Interviews

A successful hiring manager will design the interview process to be as accessible as possible and aim to anticipate potential requests for accommodation, creating a more inclusive experience for all candidates. Here are some recommended tips for conducting an accessible interview.

When you invite a candidate for an interview include the following:

- For in person interviews provide transit and parking information
- Provide the names of anyone else involved in the interview process
- For online interviews, ask what platform or method of communication works best for the interviewee
- Send the invitation with enough time available for candidates to let you know of any accommodation in advance, so that you can make the appropriate arrangements.

Some people may request accommodation before an interview including:

- An American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter
- A quiet location
- An interview scheduled during a time of day when the applicant is most focused or best able to communicate
- A location accessible for someone using a mobility device
- Advance copies of interview questions
- Good lighting
- Seating arrangements where the candidate can see interviewers clearly

Style of Interview

Accessible interview best practices include asking only questions that relate to the inherent requirements of the position and use behavioural style questions to determine skills. Some positions allow for alternate forms of interviews or longer timeslots to ensure that a candidate can develop rapport with you, and you can learn their skills and abilities that relate to the job, as well as their personality. Applicants who use more time to respond may benefit from more time to formulate responses during the interview. Applicants who have trouble answering hypothetical questions might be best able to show their skills in other ways, such as:

- Written questionnaires
- Skills-based tests
- Simulations of job tasks



Communication during an interview

During the interview if you're wondering whether a candidate needs help at any stage, **ask**. The person may need help and will explain what kind is needed; or the person may not need any assistance

- Unless an applicant requests otherwise, **speak at a normal pace and volume**.
- Speak to the applicant directly, **not** to a support person.
- **If the interview is in person**, do not touch a service animal or mobility device without the owner's permission. If an applicant isn't sure about how much information to offer in response to a question, let the person know when you have received enough information or when you need more.

When you have successfully established the intent to make the interview process accessible and accommodating, candidates who communicate differently may be more trusting and will let you know what works best for them.

There are a variety of ways that we all communicate, using words, body language, facial cues, sounds, and technology. It is important to remember that everyone has their own methods, and some may utilize additional supports, technology, or may just seem to be culturally different from your method. For example, communication styles and methods may include:

- ASL interpretation
- Speechreading
- Using hearing aids or Assistive Listening Systems
- Understanding straightforward language instead of figures of speech
- Not making eye contact
- Writing
- Using Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC) devices
-

Online Accessibility considerations

Before you hold the interview, ensure that you have considered all of the points below and identified anything that needs to be addressed before the interview can take place:

- **Is the platform** accessible? Some remote participation tools present accessibility barriers making these tools unusable by people who have a disability, and incompatible with assistive technologies.
- Do you have text captioning or sign language interpretations available?

- Is the material being shown accessible to all? People with vision impairments use a screen reader and cannot see a shared screen or a video. Make all materials available beforehand or provide a link to them in the chat.
- Have you asked invited participants which type of accessibility they need?
- You can include this question on the registration form.
- Will speakers have their cameras on? This enables people who are lip readers to follow along.
- Is there adequate lighting on the person speaking? People who read lips need to see the person's lips.
- Are presenters using virtual backgrounds? When people use pictures as a virtual background, it can wash away their face.
- Are presenters wearing dark colours? Suggest that speakers wear dark-coloured clothes so the contrast will be high. Otherwise, the lighting on light colours washes out people's faces.

3.0. Disclosure of disability

Interviewers cannot request a medical diagnosis. They also cannot ask questions about an applicant's disability unless a question relates to how an applicant would perform certain job tasks. Applicants who disclose their disabilities before or during an interview may offer information about disability and accommodations. Others may focus on other aspects of their backgrounds, such as previous work or educational experiences, which is more relevant.

Questions employers CAN ask:

- How would you do this particular task?
- Can you work the hours required for this position?
- Can you perform the requirements of this position?
- Is the lighting OK? Does this desk meet your needs?

Questions employers CANNOT ask:

- Do you have any disabilities or medical conditions? What are they?
- How did you become disabled? What is your diagnosis?
- How often do you miss work for doctor's appointments?



4.0. Willingness to Accommodate Statement

Your job posting, website, job descriptions and any other communication should state that your company encourages and welcomes applications from people who have a disability.

Be sure to include who applicants should contact if they need accommodations during the application process. This person or department should be available through multiple communication methods, such as phone, mail, and email.

Conclusion

In the end, employers who know how to make the hiring process accessible will have access to a larger pool of qualified, eager applicants. They will also be able to:

- Hold successful interviews with workers who choose not to disclose their disabilities
- Accommodate existing workers who develop disabilities
- Do more business with customers or clients who have a disability

This guidebook is designed to help you think about what adjustments can be made to your existing processes and procedures, so that your journey to a diverse, inclusive and successful business is intentional and successful.



Portions of this guide are adapted from the Accessible eRecruiting Guide produced by the New York City Mayor's Office for People With Disabilities for City agencies.

- [Web Accessibility Checklist](#)
- [Accessible Social Media Guide](#)
- [Accessible Slidedecks Guide](#)
- [Accessible Documents Guide](#)
- [Accessible Virtual Meetings Guide](#)
- [Audio Description and Captioning Guide](#)