

Best Practices for Apprenticeship Trainers

Apprentices are not required to disclose a disability or medical condition. Trainers should never ask whether an apprentice has a disability or make assumptions about the disability. Instead, trainers should focus on job expectations, observable performance, and offer flexible, inclusive training practices.

When an apprentice voluntarily discloses a disability or requests support, trainers must engage in the interactive process to explore reasonable accommodations. This should prompt the trainer to have a conversation with an apprentice on what would benefit and support the apprentice in the classroom or learning the job. The trainer should use supportive language when discussing accommodation with the apprentice and focus on the performance and learning needs of the apprentice.

Some tips in understanding reasonable accommodations:

- ✓ Accommodations is an ongoing, interactive process between the trainer and the apprentice.
- ✓ Be proactive in communication with apprentices.
- ✓ Accommodations may look different for different people and could look different at each phase of the apprenticeship: classroom learning, hands-on training, fieldwork, certification, and employment.
- ✓ Accommodations are established to help an individual be successful at each phase of the apprenticeship.
- ✓ Most accommodations can be low-or-no cost modifications.
- ✓ You have resources (below) to get more information about accommodations.

Please note if an apprentice is connected to specific workforce programs. Their case manager can assist the trainer and apprentice in supports.

Individuals learn differently so incorporate different modes of training for the apprentice. One of the best practices for apprenticeships serving youth is to adopt Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. These would be supports offered to everyone, not just those who disclose a disability.

Examples of UDL include:

- Clear written and verbal instructions

- Demonstrations and hands-on modeling
- Predictable schedules and routines
- Extra time for skill mastery
- Visual checklists
- Quiet or low-distraction workplaces, when feasible
- Multiple ways to demonstrate understanding or mastery

Because these supports are universally available to all participants, they:

- Reduce the need for disclosure
- Normalize accommodation-like practices
- Improve outcomes for all learners

The following resources can assist trainers in finding accommodation, information on laws regarding people with disabilities, and training opportunities. Links also provide references to disability programs that can provide additional support.

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

[Employer Page](#)

- Accommodation Solutions by Occupation and Industry
 - The resources include examples of accommodation solutions by occupation and industry, which could be helpful for many industry-based internships.
- Training and Certification

[Information from Supporting Apprentice Success: Unlocking the Power of American Workers with Disabilities through Apprenticeship](#) – the resource has good tips for trainers on possible accommodations for each phase of the apprenticeship.

[Apprenticeship Accommodations Toolkit | U.S. Department of Labor](#) – resource has a variety of information.

[Ability Tools](#) provides a variety of services for Californians with disabilities of all ages including Device Lending and Demonstration Centers, reuse programs, a financial loan program for Assistive Technology (AT), and in-person and webinar trainings. Ability Tools offers a free membership to anyone interested in learning more about AT and connects Californians with

disabilities to assistive technology devices, tools, and services to make life easier.

Civil Rights Department offers information on [reasonable accommodation](#) and sample request for [reasonable accommodation package](#).

The California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) is established by state and federal law as an independent state agency to ensure that people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families receive the services and supports they need. [SCDD | State Council on Developmental Disabilities](#)

Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) – provides counseling, employment and training services for people with disabilities. DOR's business specialists in each [DOR district](#) can work with businesses on any questions they may have.

[DAS Trainings and Webinars - CA Department of Rehabilitation](#) (DAS), located with DOR, provides technical assistance, training and information on various disability laws. Prior webinars are posted on their website.

Disability Benefits 101 offers information on work and benefits planning: [DB101 California - Disability Benefits 101: Working with a Disability in California](#)

Social Security's Ticket to Work (Ticket) Program supports career development for people ages 18 through 64 who receive Social Security disability benefits and want to work. The Ticket Program is free and voluntary. It helps people with disabilities move toward financial independence and connects them with the services and support they need to succeed in the workforce. [The Work Site | SSA](#)

[Independent Living Centers](#) can also assist apprentices with support services they may need.