

Diversity & Inclusion Strategy Implementation; Best Practices in Employer Engagement (Jan 2015)

Professionals working in the field of Supported Employment / Employment Inclusion recognize on a fundamental level that (traditional) employment service outcomes for people with disabilities do not occur without the engagement and participation of an employer. We also recognize that although the foundation of our work is to assist *people with disabilities* to identify, pursue, acquire and maintain employment – employers must be equally served through this work and through our service commitment to them.

Employment Inclusion Service Providers represent valuable ‘Community Partnerships’ which can assist businesses with many elements of personnel management including recruitment, onboarding and retention. Service Providers also play a role in building employer capacity around Diversity and Inclusion. It has become essential that Service Providers reflect in their engagement with Canadian Business, a ‘customer service ethic’ which includes an understanding of the business as well as responsiveness to their personnel management needs.

Although the practices outlined in this document specifically address the relationship between service providers and business, it should be noted that all of the interventions and supports along the ‘service continuum’ should equally serve job-seekers/employees with disabilities and Canadian business.

Service Alignment:

Service providers

1. Develop services and train staff to be an expert resource to employers
2. Ensure that interventions along the service continuum explore and verify skills, abilities, readiness, employment goals and job targets along with any accommodations or supports which would be required to facilitate greater employment success, performance and job retention
3. Ensure that requisite resources are in place to effectively support the prospective candidate and employer with recruitment, onboarding and employment retention
4. Ensure that staff reflect excellent ‘customer service’ values and etiquette with employers

Recruitment:

Service providers

1. Commit to building a lasting, mutually beneficial relationship with Calgary Businesses
2. Familiarize themselves with the business, personnel needs, operations and work culture
3. Provide resources and accurate information to assist employers with inclusive recruitment
4. Facilitate ‘talent-matching’ – bringing the best candidate forward for the specific workplace
5. Ensure employers are aware of any accommodations required for interviews
6. Assist employers with interviews in terms of communication accommodation and facilitating information exchange, as per the employers’ and candidates’ needs and wishes

Onboarding:

Service providers

1. Provide accurate information to the employer about the range and scope of services available
2. Verify job description, performance and workplace culture expectations
3. Support the employee to understand and meet performance and culture expectations
4. Assist with the identification and enablement of mentors and natural supports
5. Augment (where required) the employer's usual training and orientation processes (coaching)
6. Consult and advise around reasonable accommodation where required

Retention:

Service providers

1. Communicate their role in 'diversity and inclusion capacity building' to employers
2. Document the employer's service expectations re accessibility, resources, contact
3. Engage in regular discussions with employers to assess satisfaction, success and challenges
4. Engage directly (where required / requested) to assist with training or other interventions
5. Engage directly around changes to duties, supervision or processes to ensure job retention
6. Advocate and facilitate resolution where concerns arise for employer or employee
7. Remain accessible to employers and reflect excellent 'customer service'

Community Partnerships - Considerations for Employers

The service provider,

Has references from other employers

Has a formalized program which provides a range of recruitment, onboarding and retention services

Has an established system for workplace 'talent-matching' and ensuring 'talent-readiness'

Has documentation to verify this job target as an appropriate talent match (action/investment plan etc.)

Has staff and resources to assist with orientation, training, mentorship / natural support development

Will support the employer to communicate expectations and address concerns if required

Service providers should be able to describe how they build employer capacity in inclusive recruitment and diversity management, specifically how their services can:

- Make recruitment and on-boarding accessible
- Address employee retention, performance management, career development and job changes
- Develop strategies and policies for supporting employees with disabilities
- Develop accommodation plans for employees with disabilities