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Intentional Inclusion: Creating Workplaces Where People with Disabilities Thrive

Will begin at 2:00 PM Eastern Time

- Audio and visuals are provided through the online webinar platform
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- This session will be open-captioned

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Technical Assistance

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  - Call 301-217-0124

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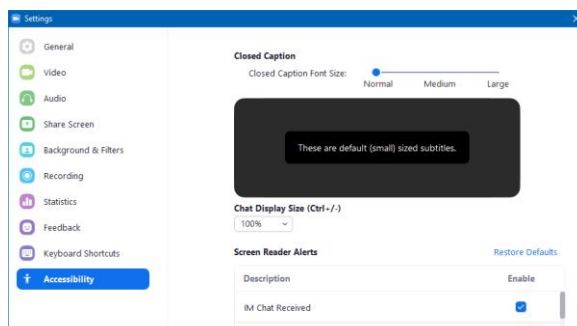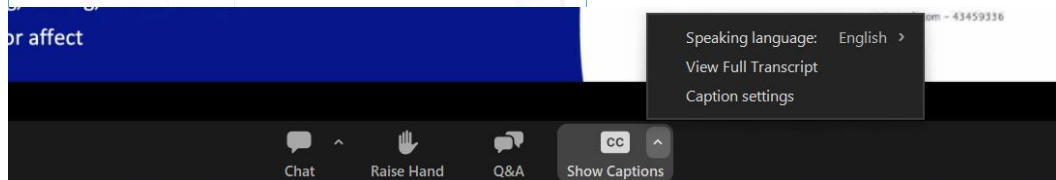- Open the Audio Settings window to change audio settings

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- Only those who purchased certificates when registering for the session are eligible to receive one

- Certificates are available only for attending the live session; attendance will be verified

- The code to submit for a certificate will be announced later in the session

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Presentation Accessibility

- For the benefit of participants who are not able to see the presentation slides on the webinar platform, speakers will

  - Announce slide numbers

  - Describe images that are meaningful to the content of the session

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About Your Hosts…

TransCen, Inc.

- Improving the lives of people with disabilities through meaningful work and community inclusion

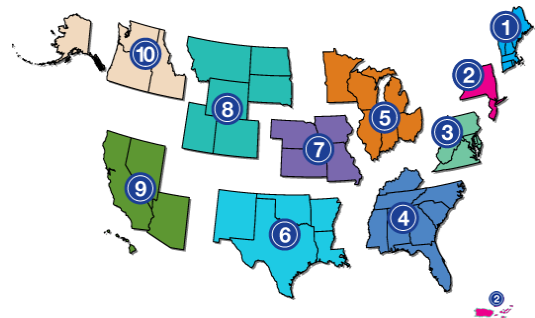**Mid-Atlantic ADA Center,** a project of TransCen

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ADA National Network

- Ten regional centers provide guidance, training, and materials on the ADA

  - **1-800-949-4232**

  - **ADAta.org**

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Disclaimer

The Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, operated by TransCen Inc., provides information, guidance, and training the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The information and/or materials provided are intended solely as informal guidance and should not be construed as legal advice. The Mid-Atlantic ADA Center is funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) (grant #90DPAD0008). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). These contents do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, or HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

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Intentional Inclusion:
Creating Workplaces Where People with Disabilities Thrive

Beth Loy, Ph.D.
Policy Advisor
Office of Disability Employment Policy
U.S. Department of Labor

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ODEP

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- ODEP is the only non-regulatory federal agency that promotes policies and coordinates with employers and all levels of government to **increase workplace success for people with disabilities**.

- ODEP's mission is to develop and influence policies and practices that **increase the number and quality of employment opportunities for people with disabilities**.

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Presentation Overview

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3/19/2024

Background

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What is an inclusive environment?

- An **inclusive environment** is one where all employees feel supported and welcomed - a workplace including opportunities for growth, feedback loops for employee input, and a psychologically safe workplace culture.

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What is disability inclusion?

- **Disability inclusion** means employees do not leave their disabled identities at the door. Instead, they are comfortable bringing their whole selves to work and using their diverse experiences and perspectives to develop products and services that better resonate with clients and customers.

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Why foster a disability-inclusive culture?

1. Increase the hiring and retention of people with disabilities to **benefit** from a wider pool of talent, skills, and creative business solutions.
2. Achieve **compliance** with federal regulations.
3. Create and sustain diverse and inclusive workplaces where people want to **self-identify** as having a disability.

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How is success measured?

- Ensure a strategy that includes collecting, setting, and iterating on **metrics for success**.
  - ✓ Implement an **employee survey** to gather feedback on the "inclusive" experience.
  - ✓ Designate a group of individuals who will be held **accountable** for implementation, evaluation, and ongoing monitoring.
  - ✓ Use the Voluntary **Self-Identification** of Disability Form for recordkeeping and data analysis.

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Understanding Self-Identification

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Key Distinction: Disability Disclosure

- **What It Is:** An open discussion between an employee with a disability and their manager or co-workers where the <u>disclosure</u> is to request an accommodation or inform.

- **Examples**
    - An employee discloses they have <u>cancer</u> to their manager because they will need an accommodation of a flexible schedule to attend treatments and deal with fatigue.
    - An employee brings a <u>service animal</u> to work and voluntarily discloses it to her co-workers so they can discuss how to interact with the animal.

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Key Distinction: Self-Identification

- **What It Is:**
    - A response to an employer's act of inviting applicants and employees to identify as having a disability voluntarily for data collection.
    - Occurs when an individual shares information about one's disability status through a formal self-identification program.
    - Data are kept confidential and used for aggregated statistical purposes to understand the composition of an organization's workforce.
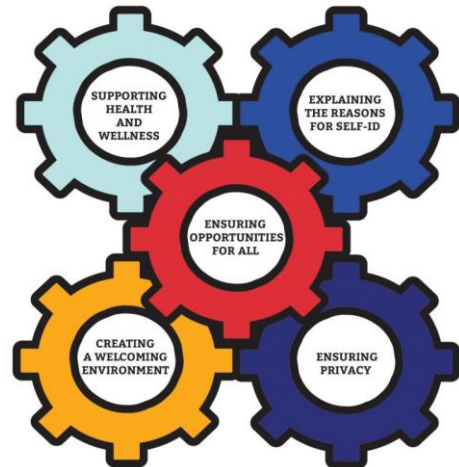
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Key Elements: Self-Identification (1)

- Employers must create an environment in which employees and applicants are comfortable **self-identifying** to measure success.

- People with disabilities report that they are more likely to **self-identify** if they see their employer making efforts to create an inclusive environment.

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Key Elements: Self-Identification (2)

- Federal agencies and private employers **are allowed** to invite applicants and employees to identify themselves as having disabilities if the information is treated **confidentially and used only for affirmative action**.

- As part of Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, **federal contractors/subcontractors must invite** applicants/employees to self-identify as a person with a disability. Applicants are invited to do so at both the pre-and post-offer stages, and employees are to do so every five years.

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Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability Form

Please check one of the boxes below:

☐ Yes, I have a disability, or have had one in the past
☐ No, I do not have a disability and have not had one in the past
☐ I do not want to answer

PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENT: According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. This survey should take about 5 minutes to complete.
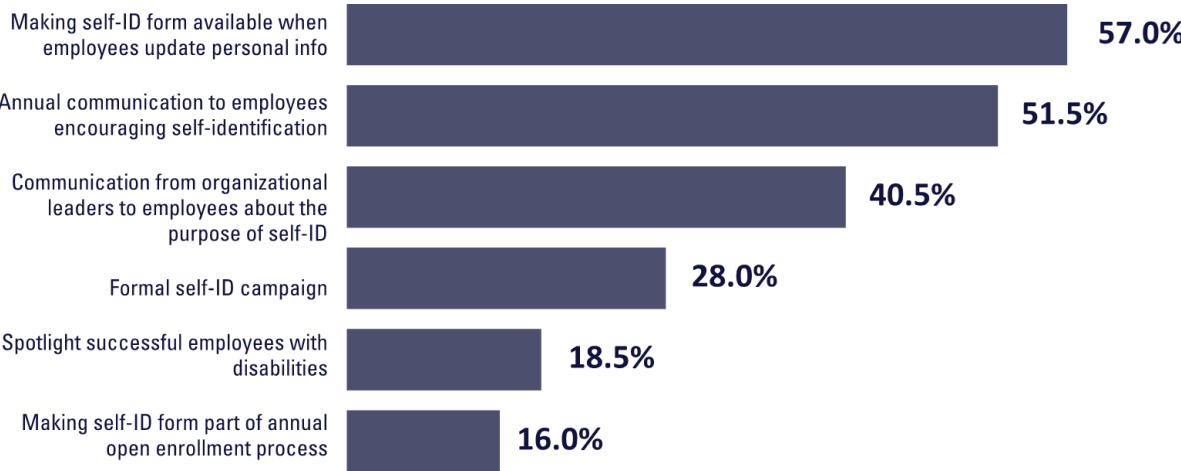
For Employer Use Only

Employers may modify this section of the form as needed for recordkeeping purposes.
For example:
Job Title: Date of Hire:

Encouraging Self-Identification | Voluntary Self-ID Form

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Practices Encouraging Self-Identification

Making self-ID form available when employees update personal info — **57.0%**

Annual communication to employees encouraging self-identification — **51.5%**

Communication from organizational leaders to employees about the purpose of self-ID — **40.5%**

Formal self-ID campaign — **28.0%**

Spotlight successful employees with disabilities — **18.5%**

Making self-ID form part of annual open enrollment process — **16.0%**

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Fostering a Disability-Inclusive Culture

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Strategy #1

Add the "A" in accessibility to an organization's DEI value statement.

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The "How" of Adding "A" to DEIA

- Ensure content produced, systems maintained, and meetings organized are accessible

- Establish policies for accessibility and inclusion

- Lead efforts to ensure accessibility is integral to the employee lifecycle

- Address day-to-day accessibility needs by ensuring individuals can request and receive assistive technologies

- Fully resource the technology program to drive innovation and accessibility in parallel

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Strategy #2

Ensure physical, digital, process, procurement, and communications accessibility.

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The "How" of Accessibility

- Develop an accessible website and online application system
- Ensure physical spaces, public areas, and emergency plans are accessible and use universal design principles
- Only use accessible locations for offsite work functions
- Ensure internal change management and public-facing initiatives are accessible
- Use procurement checks to ensure products and services are accessible

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Strategy #3

Cultivate a psychologically safe culture.

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The "How" of Psychological Safety

- Use preferred terminology
- Implement mentorship programs
- Have leadership express the importance of bringing one's whole self to work
- Create workplace flexibility options
- Develop a swift process for conflict resolution
- Engage in year-round activities that train and support a psychologically safe infrastructure

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Strategy #4

Implement disability employee resource groups (ERGs).

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The "How" of ERGs

- Secure executive sponsorship and a budget
- Provide a direct line of communication to organizational leaders
- Generate interest by developing outreach
- Determine core values, goals, and timelines
- Create visibility by conducting special events
- Develop workshops on related topics

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Strategy #5

Create a seamless accommodation process.

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The "How" of Accommodation

- Educate all employees on accommodation policy and process

- Train all supervisors on how to recognize accommodation requests

- Centralize the accommodation process to one department

- Reduce friction in the accommodation process by eliminating unnecessary steps

- Make common accommodation requests self-serve (e.g., ergonomic mice, screen magnification, etc.)

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Results

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Disability Inclusion

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- With <u>11% of U.S. working-age adults (18-64) having a disability</u>, creating inclusion-based policies and practices is **essential**.

- Companies that **lead** on critical disability inclusion criteria <u>realize</u>:
  - 1.6x more revenue,
  - 2.6x more net income, and
  - 2x more economic profit than other participants.

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Resources to Assist

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Best, Promising, and Emerging Practices

- Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN)
  - AskEARN.org
- Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
  - AskJAN.org
- Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology (PEAT)
  - PEATWorks.org
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
  - EEOC.gov

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Questions?

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- If you paid for a certificate of participation, check the reminder email you received about this session for instructions

- Please email the code above to **ADAtraining@transcen.org** by **5 PM E.T. on March 25, 2024**

- Certificates are emailed 1 – 2 weeks after the session

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Upcoming Webinars

Common Myths and Mix-Ups: Accessibility Standards
Wednesday, April 17, 2 to 3:30 ET

To be posted soon!

Legal Rights and the Inclusion of K-12 Students with Mental Health and Behavior-Related Disabilities
Presented by the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Wednesday, May 22, 2 to 3 p.m. ET

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Thank You for Joining Us!

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Toll-free: **800-949-4232** (DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV)

Local: **301-217-0124**

ADAinfo@transcen.org

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