



# Leadership in a Disability Inclusive Workforce: The Just-in-Time Program

## It's about business.

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People with disabilities represent the largest diversity population in our country today. Yet, in many ways, disability is the “forgotten diversity.” Diversity plans that do not fully include disability will not be as powerful in benefiting the business. Disability is, in many ways, the “new diversity.” Diversity plans that meaningfully include disability enable the business to reach a broader talent pool, prevent turnover, become an employer of choice, and promote performance. Also, people with disabilities are a significant customer segment, representing 20% of our population. Diversity plans that include disability will be more powerful in reaching the full range of the market. In some ways, people with disabilities face the same diversity and inclusion challenges other diversity populations have faced. Yet in other ways, disability is unique, with a different set of inclusion challenges, legal factors and practice implications.

## Our purpose.

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The purpose of the Leading in a Disability Inclusive Workforce program is to re-invigorate diversity efforts by including a “disability is diversity” message. This is achieved in two ways: 1. By providing training and consulting to a core group within the organization who have a personal or professional interest in diversity and disability issues. (This core group can either be formed for the program or can be based on an already existing group, such as HR professionals or a diversity-related resource/affinity group); and 2. By providing a customized, online toolkit to enable managers/supervisors to lead effectively in a workforce that includes people with disabilities.

## Focus on leaders.

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Why does this program focus on managers? As face-to-face leaders, managers and supervisors are the kingpins of diversity and talent engagement efforts. They are key players in decisions about hiring, coaching, performance, promotions and employee development. Yet, there are few diversity initiatives made specifically for them—made to fit their roles, their challenges and their unique contributions to the inclusion effort. The “world” of the manager/supervisor has changed dramatically over the past two decades. Managers today tend to have more direct reports, often lead remotely, and are confronted by rapidly changing, complex business conditions. Also, there is significant “churn” today in the manager role, both within and outside companies. For these reasons, traditional in-person training may not be the best way to reach these key players. What is needed is an initiative that makes sense and is immediately useable in the world of a manager--what is needed is a “just-in-time” approach.

## The Just-in-Time Toolkit.

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Consisting of ten tools, each tool in the Toolkit is based on a disability-related situation or issue managers typically encounter in leading their work teams. Each tool consists of a core section with optional features. The core section of each tool, which can be used in five minutes or less, uses jargon-free language to provide clear explanations directed toward real leadership issues. Optional features following each core section include a “Test yourself” quiz, a “Print & Go” checklist and section with further resources. Some tools have brief film clips.

## Here’s what managers are saying.

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The JIT Toolkit has been piloted and researched in a variety of organizations, both public and private. Here’s what managers are saying:

- *I learned a TON really quickly. Managers can find information on this website quickly. LOVE it!*
- *It is well laid out and there is a whole lot of valuable information. I have very little time and to go in and go into detail, that tells me it is extremely well put together and attractive. It is very, very good.*
- *I actually loved it and thought it was fantastic....If you can get managers into it, they will use it.*
- *The tools on accommodation are the most relevant and address things managers struggle with and how to get accommodation for people. There is one place to go and to get help with this--the Toolkit.*
- *LOVED IT! Subject matter people who wrote this weren't paid enough!*
- *Extremely thorough. Very well done. It gives the foundation and framework and is useable and there is coaching on a topic. With some of the new laws on ADA—it is not just defending yourself in a lawsuit; it's about competitive advantage.*

## What does the program include?

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- **A customized two-three hour in-person workshop for the core group.** This interactive workshop engages participants by connecting disability inclusiveness with competitive advantage in several ways: 1. By considering disability, workplace and business trends; 2. By exploring the return on investment for disability inclusive workplace practices; 3. By examining strategies and best practices for disability inclusiveness; 4. By learning about legal updates around disability and employment issues; and 5. By working through real-life scenarios around disability inclusiveness in the workplace.
- **Customization of the Online JIT Toolkit for your organization.** All ten tools are customized to accurately reflect the unique disability processes, resources and contacts for your organization. Your organization will be given your own link to access your customized JIT Toolkit.
- **Five-year unlimited access to the Online JIT Toolkit.** Anyone in your organization will have five years of unlimited access to the JIT Toolkit. Throughout this time, the JIT Toolkit will be updated to include legal, policy and business trends.

For more information on this initiative, contact the

**Northeast ADA Center:**

800.949.4232

[northeastada@cornell.edu](mailto:northeastada@cornell.edu)