

Employment First: Frequently Asked Questions

Employers

[Kentucky Employment First law](#) states that “The General Assembly finds and declares that it is the policy of the Commonwealth of Kentucky that competitive integrated employment shall be considered the first and primary option for persons with disabilities of working age who desire to become employed.” You can [learn what Employment First means to Kentuckians](#) in this short video.

What is Employment First?

Answer: Employment First encourages businesses to consider individuals with disabilities in your recruiting and hiring. This opens up another pool of talent to help you scale up to meet your labor needs. Employment First works to increase employment opportunities, access to jobs, and fair wages for Kentuckians with disabilities. This effort brings together those looking for work with those who need good employees.

What are the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities?

Answer: Hiring individuals with disabilities can enhance workplace diversity, increase productivity, and improve employee morale. Additionally, you may qualify for tax credits such as the [Work Opportunity Tax Credit \(WOTC\)](#). If someone works with an Employment Specialist, that professional can also offer additional support in understanding your business needs, suggesting appropriate applicants, and assisting with training and retention.

What do I need to know about retaining employees with disabilities?

Answer: Employee needs will vary depending on the person. Some people will not need more than any other employee, and some may benefit from adaptations or accommodations such as adjustments to work schedules, job duties, or physical workspaces. Employment Specialists can help you identify and implement these things. [The Job Accommodation Network](#) is another useful resource. As with any employee, it is important to have clear lines of communication and provide ongoing feedback to increase retention and success on the job.

If you have questions about your rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you can contact the [Southeast ADA Center](#) for accurate and confidential information.

You can learn more about resources and ways to increase retention through webinars such as the [RETAIN Kentucky/Employment First series](#) for employers.

What can I do to attract applicants with disabilities?

Answer: You can ensure all qualified applicants can participate in your application process by checking that your [job descriptions are accessible](#) and [examining a few key things about your business](#). These small steps can increase access to the talent you need to run your business. Additionally, [these resources can help you create an inclusive workplace](#). You may also want to connect with the [Coalition Forward](#) if they are in your area; this group intentionally brings together businesses looking for employees and those who represent job seekers with disabilities. Either through this group or informally, connecting with providers of disability employment supports can be a great way to share about your company, culture, and labor needs in order to connect with people who could be a good fit for you and help fill your needs.