

Celebrating Value and Talent

A DISABILITY JOB SEEKER'S GUIDE TO THE 2025 JOB MARKET

- The State of the 2025 Job Market
- Job Seeker Success in the Age of AI
- Understanding Policy Rollbacks
- Job Seeker Resources



THE STATE OF THE 2025 JOB MARKET

Stronger competition, uneven opportunities

Unemployment for people with disabilities remains more than double the rate of non-disabled workers, highlighting ongoing barriers to workplace equity. The job market is uneven: industries like technology, healthcare, logistics, and clean energy are aggressively hiring, while others are facing hiring slowdowns. Some of this is due to economic pressures, including inflation, trade disruptions, tariffs, and regulatory changes that continue to affect budgets, supply chains, and company growth.

Job seekers should be strategic, focusing on growing sectors and leveraging networks, specialized job boards, and disability-focused employment resources.

Remote work and the impact of return-to-office mandates

The shift to remote and hybrid work during the COVID-19 pandemic significantly benefited employees who require flexible schedules, accessible environments, or reduced commuting. For many workers with disabilities, remote work became essential for full participation and productivity in the workforce. However, recent trends indicate a reversal of this flexibility. Companies are increasingly enforcing return-to-office (RTO) mandates, with some requiring employees to be on-site four or more days per week.

These policies can create substantial barriers for disabled employees, including difficult commutes, inaccessible office spaces, and rigid schedules that conflict with medical needs. Such mandates can lower productivity, increase stress, and sometimes push skilled workers out. In some cases, they function as "quiet layoffs," reducing staff without the publicity or formal HR processes of traditional layoffs, and they often disproportionately affect disabled workers who rely on flexibility or accommodations to perform effectively.

Job seekers should review employer policies on remote work and accommodations, and highlight personal strengths in independent work, virtual collaboration, and accessible technology. Advocating for hybrid or remote roles isn't just convenience—it's essential for equitable access to work.

Disability At Work Insights



81%

While 81% of disabled workers value remote work, 54% of Fortune 100 companies have enforced full return-to-office mandates in 2025

Skills Employers Need

In 2025, employers are looking for candidates with both technical skills and strong interpersonal abilities. Knowing what's in demand can help job seekers with disabilities target the right opportunities.

High-Demand Industries

- **Technology & AI:** Growing need for skills in AI, machine learning, and data analysis.
- **Healthcare & Biotechnology:** Expanding due to an aging population and advances in medical technology.
- **Renewable Energy:** Rapid growth in solar, wind, energy efficiency, and sustainable tech roles.
- **Logistics & Supply Chain:** Increased demand for workers skilled in transportation, inventory, and supply chain management

Essential Skills

Employers value soft skills like adaptability, problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and emotional intelligence. People with disabilities often excel in these areas, turning lived experience and resilience into valuable workplace strengths.

Bridging the Gap

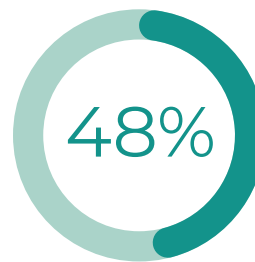
With growing opportunities in Technology, Healthcare, Renewable Energy, and Logistics, job seekers with disabilities can position themselves for success by aligning their skills with market needs. Employers are looking for both technical expertise and soft skills such as adaptability,

problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and emotional intelligence—areas where people with disabilities often excel.

To navigate workplace barriers like inaccessible environments, rigid schedules, or limited awareness of disability inclusion, be proactive: up-skill in high-demand fields, showcase your strengths, leverage assistive technologies, and connect with inclusive employers and disability-focused networks.

Understanding your rights and requesting accommodations when needed ensures you can fully participate, perform at your best, and access the opportunities highlighted in today's competitive 2025 job market.

Disability At Work Insights



Job Seekers found the process of requesting accommodations very or extremely challenging

UNDERSTANDING POLICY ROLLBACKS

Section 503 Under Pressure:

Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act requires federal contractors to take affirmative action in hiring and retaining people with disabilities, including meeting a 7% utilization goal and encouraging employees to self-identify. Current federal proposals aim to weaken these requirements by eliminating the utilization goal and reducing self-ID reporting. If enacted, this could reduce transparency in how contractors hire and retain workers with disabilities, making it harder to track progress on inclusion.

Know Your Rights

Despite potential regulatory changes, core protections remain in place. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act continue to guarantee that employers cannot discriminate based on disability and must provide reasonable accommodations to enable equal participation in the workplace. Job seekers should understand these rights, as they are key tools for advocating for accessibility and fair treatment.

Additional Barriers Ahead

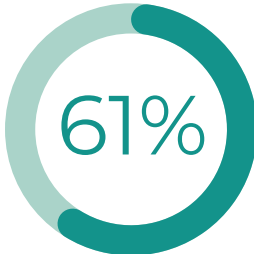
If Section 503 requirements are rolled back, job seekers with disabilities may face added challenges, including fewer accountability measures for federal contractors, less visibility into which employers are truly inclusive, and potential declines in proactive recruitment.

These shifts could increase the burden on job seekers to identify supportive employers and advocate for their own needs.

Staying Proactive

Job seekers can prepare by prioritizing employers with strong public commitments to disability inclusion, researching company accessibility practices, and leveraging networks like disability-focused ERGs and career platforms. Tailoring resumes with clear, measurable achievements and preparing to communicate accommodation needs confidently can also strengthen your position. While policy shifts may weaken external accountability, being informed, strategic, and proactive can help ensure you find employers that value your skills and contributions.

Disability At Work Insights



61%

Job Seekers indicated that company culture is an important factor when searching for a new job

THRIVING IN THE AI-DRIVEN HIRING ERA

The hiring landscape is increasingly shaped by AI-powered Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), resume scanners, and interview tools. Job seekers who understand how to leverage these technologies—and tailor their materials accordingly—can gain a competitive edge.

Pro Tip: Use AI as a tool and filter to refine your materials, but remember—your skills and perspective set you apart.

Resumes & Cover Letters

- **Optimize for Keywords:** Use clear, role-specific keywords from the job description. AI tools scan for skills, certifications, and relevant experience, so tailor each application accordingly.
- **Keep Formatting Simple:** Avoid graphics, images, and complex layouts—ATS and AI parsing systems often cannot read them.
- **Highlight Measurable Achievements:** Focus on outcomes (“increased efficiency by 20%” or “managed a team of 10”), rather than vague responsibilities.
- **Choose the Right File Type:** Save documents in Word (.docx) or text-friendly PDF formats to ensure compatibility with AI systems.
- **Leverage AI Writing Tools Wisely:** Use AI to draft bullet points, improve phrasing, or summarize accomplishments, but always personalize and ensure accuracy—authenticity is key.

Interviews

- **Expect Structured Questions:** AI-driven interview platforms often favor behavioral questions (“Tell me about a time when...”). Prepare with the [S-T-A-R and S-E-T Interview Methods](#).
- **Practice with AI:** AI-powered tools like [Acredit](#), [Score My Interview](#), and [Creately](#) let you simulate interviews, receive structured feedback, and analyze both verbal and non-verbal responses, helping you refine and improve your performance.
- **Accommodations Are Essential:** If you need extra time, accessible platforms, or interpreters, request them confidently—employers are legally required to provide reasonable accommodations. These supports aren’t special favors; they are tools that enable you to work productively and effectively. Clear, open communication about what you need and how it helps you succeed makes the process easier for everyone. Framing accommodations in terms of supporting your best work keeps the focus where it belongs: on enabling performance and inclusion.

Online Presence

- Keep LinkedIn updated with field keywords, follow inclusive employers, and use disability-focused networks like [Disability Solutions’ Career Center](#) to increase visibility with recruiters.

JOB SEEKER RESOURCES

- **Build your network:** Community groups, ERGs, and LinkedIn connections can lead to opportunities.
- **Know your value:** Disability is not a weakness—it brings resilience, adaptability, and unique perspectives companies need. Don't be afraid to highlight your unique strengths.
- **Track inclusive employers:** Look for disability-focused ERGs, strong DEI statements that include disability, and transparent accessibility commitments.
- **Practice disclosure:** Decide if, when, and how you want to share your disability. There's no one right way—choose what's right for you.

Disability Solutions is here to help!

- **Career Center:** jobs.disabilitytalent.org
 - Build a profile, upload your resume, and access thousands of inclusive job opportunities.
- **Training & Webinars:** Learn interview strategies, self-ID tips, and access tools and resources to help take your job search to the next level.
disabilitytalent.org/jobseeker-resources
- **Changing Minds & Changing Lives Podcast:** Hear stories from job seekers and employers driving change.

As a job seeker with a disability, your value and talent are exactly what the workforce needs. The market may shift, policies may change, and AI may reshape hiring—but your skills, experiences, and perspective remain powerful assets.