



NCR Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Cultural Observances, Awareness Information and Events

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National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Have You Thought About Recruiting Volunteers with Disabilities?

People with disabilities may not necessarily think of CAP as a place to volunteer. We need to be more inclusive; every person should have the opportunity to join CAP. You can bust the myths and gain the gifts, talents and strengths by recruiting people with disabilities.

Put together a plan with the volunteer with disabilities about ways they can contribute to the program. Work with them to tailor assignments to strengths and any challenges they want to address. Include tasks they will participate in, how they will be trained and who may act as a mentor to help learn the ropes. We all have challenges and different preferences about how to overcome them.

Cover other issues like getting to and from meetings, and note any special accommodations needed.

People with disabilities are individuals like all of us. Disability is an integral part of who they are, it alone does not define them. Don't make them heroes or victims. Treat them as individuals.

Tips On Interacting with People with Disabilities

ASK BEFORE YOU HELP - Just because someone has a disability, don't assume she needs help. If the setting is accessible, people with disabilities can usually get around fine. Adults with disabilities want to be treated as independent people. Offer assistance only if the person appears to want help, ask how before you act.

BE SENSITIVE ABOUT PHYSICAL CONTACT - Some people with disabilities depend on their arms for balance. Grabbing them, even if your intention is to assist, could knock them off balance.

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK - Always speak directly to the person with a disability, not to his companion, aide or sign language interpreter. If you ask about his disability, he may feel like you are treating him as a disability, not as a human being.

DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS - People with disabilities are the best judge of what they can or cannot do. Don't make decisions for them about participating in any activity. Depending on the situation, it could be a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to exclude people because of a presumption about their limitations.

RESPOND GRACIOUSLY TO REQUESTS - When people who have disabilities ask for an accommodation for lodging, it is not a complaint. It shows they feel comfortable enough to ask for what they need.

PUT THE PERSON FIRST - Say "person with a disability" rather than "disabled person." Say "people with disabilities" rather than "the disabled." If you are not sure what words to use, ask.

AVOID OUTDATED TERMS like "handicapped, crippled or retarded." Be aware that many people with disabilities dislike jargon, euphemistic terms like "physically challenged" and "differently abled." Say "person who uses a wheelchair" rather than "confined to a wheelchair" or "wheelchair bound". The wheelchair is what enables the person to get around and participate in society; it's liberating, not confining.

REMEMBER: Make sure they feel included and welcomed.