



Accessible & Inclusive Hiring for Summer and Seasonal Staff: A Tip Sheet

Making summer hiring inclusive helps build stronger, more diverse teams. This guide offers practical tips for adapting recruitment, interviewing, and onboarding for seasonal staff, including students and first-time workers. It highlights common barriers and how to address them, and begins with Four Guiding Principles.

Start with These Four Guiding Principles

Clarity is Kindness

Use plain, concise language. Explain what is essential in a job and avoid unnecessary jargon. This helps people with learning disabilities, ADHD, or anxiety.

Access is Anticipated

Plan for accessibility from the beginning. This supports people with physical disabilities, chronic health conditions, or low vision.

Inclusion is Intentional

Who you reach is who you'll hire. Outreach and onboarding should reflect a range of identities, including people who are neurodivergent or deaf.

Flexibility is Fairness

Rigid expectations can block great candidates. Design roles and schedules that work for people managing fatigue, PTSD, or caregiving responsibilities.

Common Barriers and What Helps

1. Rushed Timelines

Barrier: Limited time to include accessibility in job postings or accommodations.
What Helps: Use standard templates that already include accessible language and accommodation information.

2. Lack of Experience with Accommodations

Barrier: Students may not know how to ask for accommodations or what's available.

What Helps: Include phrases like “If you need accommodations, let us know and we’ll work with you” in job ads and interviews.

Job Postings & Outreach

- Write job ads in plain language with short, clear sentences.
- Separate essential from preferred qualifications.
- Include a statement like:
“We are committed to a barrier-free hiring process. If you need accommodations, let us know.”
- Share postings in diverse networks such as:
 - Nova Scotia Works
 - Disability organizations (e.g., ReachAbility, Autism NS)
 - Youth-serving groups (e.g., ISANS, YMCA)
 - Schools, colleges, and universities

Application and Interview Process

Barrier: Inaccessible application methods or tools

What Helps:

- Offer multiple ways to apply: phone, digital, or paper.
- Ensure forms are screen-reader friendly and mobile accessible.
- Avoid requiring video submissions without alternatives.

Barrier: Interview formats that disadvantage people with certain disabilities

What Helps:

- Provide interview questions in advance.
- Ask every candidate if they need accommodations.
- Allow responses by phone, video, or written format.
- Focus on essential job skills, not just “polish.”

Onboarding and Team Inclusion

Barrier: Fast or informal onboarding that misses access needs

What Helps:

- Provide schedules and checklists in plain language.
- Share information over time, not all on Day 1.
- Use visuals like maps and checklists.
- Offer materials in multiple formats: printed, digital, screen-reader accessible.
- Assign a buddy to help orient new staff.

Barrier: Attitudes that accommodations are not worth it for short-term roles

What Helps:

- Treat seasonal staff as full team members.
- Include all staff in team rituals and celebrations.
- Train supervisors on accessibility and bias.

Inclusive Workplaces Start on Day One

- Ask every staff member: “What helps you do your best work?”
- Offer multiple training methods: written, shadowing, hands-on.
- Check in regularly about needs and learning preferences.
- Ensure physical spaces are accessible: clear walkways, quiet spaces, accessible washrooms.
- Respect different communication styles: verbal, written, text based.

Resources

[Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate](#)

[Accessibility Confident Employers \(ACE\) Resource Hub](#)

This searchable accessibility resource hub focuses on training, resources, funding, tip sheets, and guidebooks specific to Nova Scotia.

Leadership

- Review this [article written by Forbes HR Council member Nish Parikh](#), about the Six Key Character Traits of a Disability Inclusion Leader.
- This [Accessibility.com post](#) summarizes the key findings from research by Global Disability Inclusion and Mercer about Disabled Employee Engagement.
- Review this [President’s Group BC resource](#) to help you develop inclusive managers through coaching and performance conversations.
- Read the [Make It Count: Measuring for Disability Inclusion in Your Workplace guide](#) and toolkit and consider committing to ask your employees if they identify as having a disability.
- The Canadian Mental Health Commission developed a national standard on

creating psychologically safe workplaces and a [free e-course on implementing it](#).

Representation

- Sign up for the [First Voice Accessibility Expert Advice](#) - a roster of Nova Scotians with disabilities who are interested in reviewing and providing input on projects.
- Consider signing up for [Not Myself Today](#), a unique initiative from the Canadian Mental Health Association which raises awareness and reduces mental health stigma. Participating companies receive employee engagement activities, tools, and resources.

Accommodations

- Visit the [Job Accommodation Network's website](#) for many examples of accommodations policies, process, and forms.
- [This 7-minute video from Canadian Association for Supported Employment](#) is a great primer on accommodations. It could be used to introduce the concept to people managers.