13.4 Onboarding and Working with Disability Service Providers

Congrats! If you're at this point in the recruitment process, then chances are you've hired an incredible employee, and now you want to make sure they're set up for success. Knowing the supports they'll need in order to get the job done is vital, and the good news is, you don't have to do it alone. There are many service providers out there that can provide a helping hand with this process, and it doesn't necessarily mean it's going to cost you. Establishing a partnership will mean you will be able to adapt, both now and in the future, when onboarding all new employees.

In Tool 4.4, we cover the Types of Services Available to Employers, such as job developers and coaches. In using this tool, we'll discuss what you should know before working with service providers and how to get the most out of your partnership.

Questions to Ask before Working Together

Before beginning a partnership with a service provider, it is important that you learn exactly how they will be supporting you. Some questions to ask would be:

1. Do your services come at a cost? If so, do you know of funding sources?

2. What supports will we receive from your organization once the candidate is placed?

3. How long do you offer these supports after we've hired someone?

4. What support do you offer candidates to ensure workplace readiness?

5. What do you expect from us as a business working with you?
    Knowing the answers to these questions before you proceed will ensure that both parties are clear on the expectations and the outcomes.

Support during the Onboarding Process

Onboarding new employees can be overwhelming, particularly if you have limited time and resources. You may want to consider having a specialized service provider come in to help determine the accommodations that would support your new employee, helping them do their job most efficiently. For example, Neil Squire is a technology service provider that offers specialized assistive technology and ergonomics[1] assessments for employees who work in the office or from home.

Some services include:

- Assistive technology assessments
- Ergonomics assessments
- Worksite accommodations recommendations
- Home evaluations
- Assistive technology training
- One-handed keyboarding training
- Personalized computer training
- Educational workshops
- Technical support for assistive technology

They offer many of these services across the country, including BC, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Ontario and although some come at a cost, they work with you to determine which accommodations make the most sense based on your needs, budget, and the funding that may be available.

If these types of services aren't available in your region or don't apply to the type of employment you offer, be sure to check with your local employment services or small business centre[3] for recommendations on providers related to your industry.

Funding Options

Funding for services varies both federally and provincially; however, with the enactment of the Accessible Canada Act in 2019[2], more funding options have become available as accessibility has been made a priority. Grant programs are available throughout the country at certain times of the year. Visit our Programs and Funding page to find resources in your region.

Open and Clear Communication

Throughout the onboarding process, maintain open and clear communication with the disability service provider and your employee to make sure that everyone's needs are being met. Every employee is going to be the expert of their own needs and abilities, so remember that the best thing that you can do is ask them if there are any supports they've used in previous jobs or ones they feel now would help them in being successful in their new role. This may not be something they can answer when they first start, so you may want to check back every 3 – 6 months to see if their needs have changed.

Sources:

[1] *Neil Squire. Specialized Assistive Technology and Ergonomics. Retrieved from*
https://www.neilsquire.ca/business-programs-services/solutions/

[2] *Government of Canada. (2020, November 20). Summary of the Accessible Canada Act. Retrieved from*
https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-people-disabilities/act-summary.html

[3] *Small Business BC. Workplace Accessibility Grant. Retrieved from*
https://smallbusinessbc.ca/accessibility-resources

Disclaimer:

Hire for Talent has made every effort to use the most respectful words possible while writing these materials. We realize, however, that the most appropriate terminology may change over time. We developed these materials with the intent to respect the dignity and inherent rights of all individuals.