

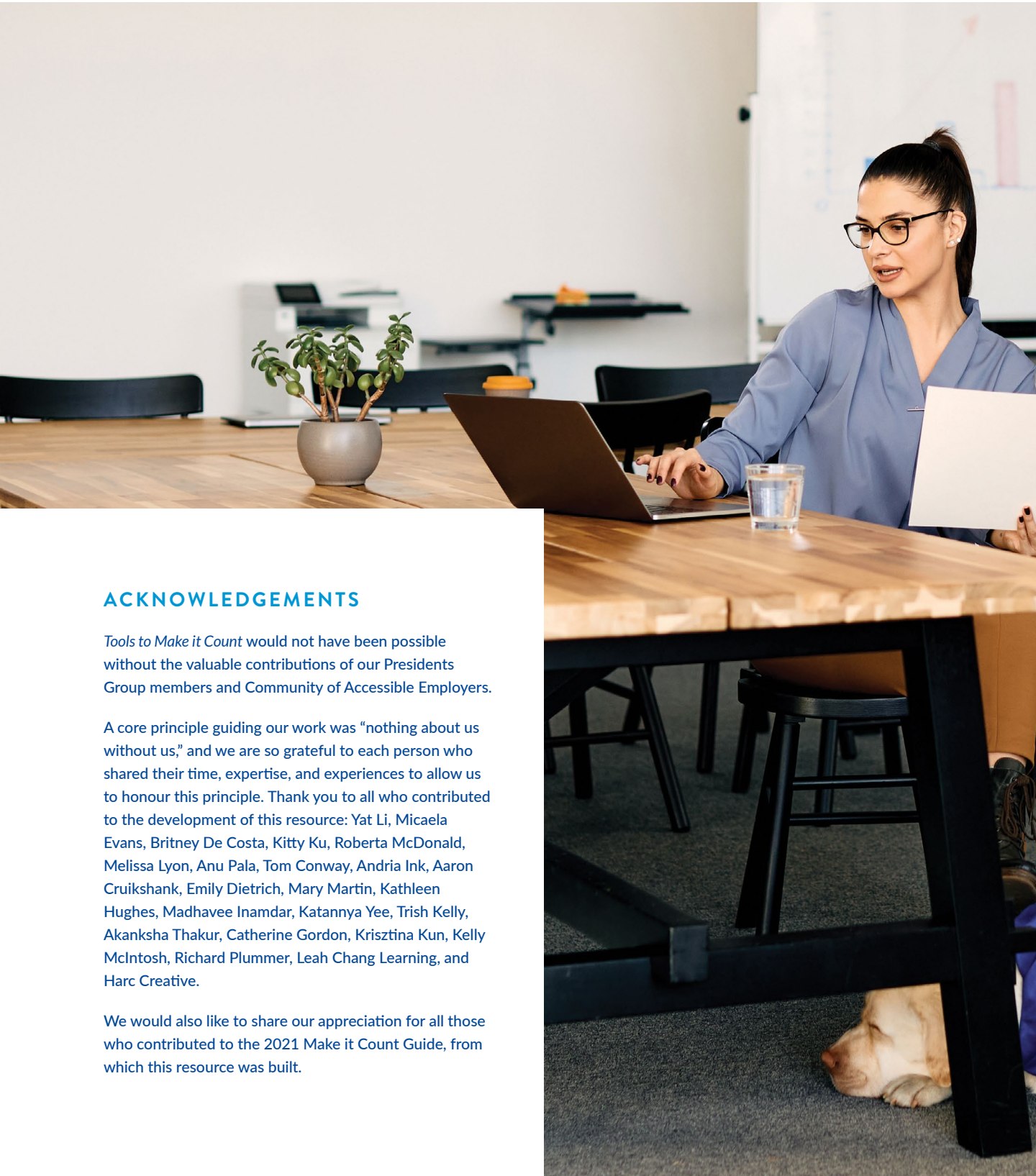


**Accessible Employers**  
a Presidents Group initiative

# Tools to Make It Count:

Develop and Implement a Disability Measurement Initiative





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Tools to Make it Count* would not have been possible without the valuable contributions of our Presidents Group members and Community of Accessible Employers.

A core principle guiding our work was “nothing about us without us,” and we are so grateful to each person who shared their time, expertise, and experiences to allow us to honour this principle. Thank you to all who contributed to the development of this resource: Yat Li, Micaela Evans, Britney De Costa, Kitty Ku, Roberta McDonald, Melissa Lyon, Anu Pala, Tom Conway, Andria Ink, Aaron Cruikshank, Emily Dietrich, Mary Martin, Kathleen Hughes, Madhavee Inamdar, Katannya Yee, Trish Kelly, Akanksha Thakur, Catherine Gordon, Krisztina Kun, Kelly McIntosh, Richard Plummer, Leah Chang Learning, and Harc Creative.

We would also like to share our appreciation for all those who contributed to the 2021 Make it Count Guide, from which this resource was built.



## INTRODUCTION

# WHO WE ARE

Accessible Employers guides and supports BC businesses in becoming inclusive, diverse, and equitable employers.



Learn more [about us](#)  
and the work we do.



As British Columbia's (BC) go-to organization for employers looking to hire more inclusively, Accessible Employers works with businesses of all sizes to navigate the accessibility landscape, establish inclusive employment policies, access training and resources, and connect with other employers on this journey.

Our hands-on approach and depth of expertise ensures that members of our community receive expert guidance and personalized support as they learn about, and explore, accessible employment safely and confidently.

## Our Governance

Accessible Employers is governed by [Open Door Group](#) and advised by [Presidents Group](#). We operate under the mandate of the Employment and Labour Market Services Division within the BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

### OPEN DOOR GROUP

Open Door Group is a non-profit organization and registered charity that has provided employment services to thousands of Canadians since 1976. It operates on the fundamental belief that all individuals have the ability to succeed in the labour market. Open Door Group provides governance and administrative oversight for Accessible Employers.

### PRESIDENTS GROUP

Formed in 2013, Presidents Group is an advisory committee and network of 25 change-driven BC business leaders who champion more accessible, inclusive workplaces. As an advisory committee for BC's Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, this group meets quarterly to share best practices and business perspectives on inclusive employment.

## Our Community of Accessible Employers

In 2018, we launched the Community of Accessible Employers, which gives every BC employer the chance to join the movement to accessible employment and access individualized support.

The [Community of Accessible Employers](#) is an open and free network for employers who are committed to inclusion in the workplace. It provides employer-focused tools, resources, and access to training and events for BC employers on how to effectively recruit, hire, and retain employees with disabilities.

We encourage businesses of all sizes who are committed to growing their knowledge of accessible employment to join our [Community of Accessible Employers](#).



Join our [Community of Accessible Employers](#).

# WELCOME

*Tools to Make it Count* is a practical toolkit for employers, like you, who want to measure the rate of disability in your workplaces.

*Tools to Make it Count* builds on Accessible Employers' 2021 *Make it Count: Measuring for Disability Inclusion in Your Workplace* guide. It has updated and easy-to-use tools and resources for everyone, no matter where you are on your disability measurement and inclusion journey.

## Nothing About Us Without Us.

We developed this resource from the principle “nothing about us without us.” To this end, we engaged BC-based employers and members of the disability community in an inclusive and participatory process involving surveys and interviews with past *Make it Count* guide users, a working group with representatives from our Community of Accessible Employers, and a peer-review with disability experts from across the province.

*Tools to Make it Count* is your jumping off point to develop, strengthen, and implement a disability inclusion measurement initiative. We've included several different resources and learnings to prepare you to measure disability inclusion in your workplace. In the case studies and success stories linked throughout, you'll find real world experiences from BC-based employers who are measuring disability. To further your learning and support in this work, you will also find links to a number of free resources.

We recognize that everyone who picks up this toolkit will be at different stages in their disability measurement and inclusion journeys, so we invite you to flip through and find the tools and resources that are helpful to you. Some tools and resources will also be useful to share with your staff or others in your community as part of your information and engagement campaigns.

## A note on language

Accessible Employers recognizes there are a variety of language preferences within each disability community. Out of respect for these preferences, we utilize both identity-first and person-first language interchangeably in our communications.



Don't worry, the [Make it Count Guide](#) hasn't gone anywhere. You can still find this invaluable resource on our website.



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## SECTION ONE

# SETTING THE STAGE

In this section, we offer tools to introduce you to key concepts that will be important as you begin, and move through, your disability measurement and inclusion and accessibility journey.



# WHAT IS A DISABILITY?

A disability is a condition that affects your mind or body. It could always be present, or it could come and go. A disability may stop you, or limit you, from doing the things you want to do.

## BARRIERS THAT GET IN YOUR WAY COULD BE:

Physical – such as a curb or a heavy door.

---

Other people's attitudes about you.

---

The expected ways of doing things that are not easy for you.

---

## A DISABILITY COULD BE:

Physical – such as having a hard time using your legs or arms.

---

Sensory – such as not being able to see or hear.

---

Mental health – such as having emotions that limit your daily activities or being unable to be in control of your thoughts.

---

Learning – such as having a hard time with reading, writing, or math.

---

Communication – such as needing technology to help talk with others.

---

Intellectual – such as needing help from others with everyday tasks like managing money and organizing time.

---

Cognitive – such as having a hard time thinking, remembering, and doing things in order.

---

Functional limitation – such as not being able to walk very far because of a heart condition or being in pain a lot of the time.

---



Check out [Accessible Employers' Disability-Inclusive Language Guide](#) to learn more about terminology that is used in different disability communities, and to support you and your staff with respectful and nuanced conversations on disability.

## DID YOU KNOW?

# 773,670

working age British Columbians (age 15-64) - 24.5% of the population - have a disability.<sup>1</sup>

# 64,990

of the 590,270 British Columbians with a disability in the labour force are unemployed.<sup>2</sup>

# 207,430

people in Canada with a disability are not in the labour force but want to work.<sup>3</sup>



“

**We are in a tough labour market across Canada, particularly in health care, and being an accessible employer is one way that Canuck Place can stand out as an employer of choice.”**

DENISE PRAILL, CEO, CANUCK PLACE  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

Many disabled people who have work potential have stopped seeking work due to attitudinal barriers, like stigma and repeated rejection, as well as physical barriers that can restrict access to certain jobs or workplaces.

The number of available workers in BC could be significantly higher if our community of employers can show people with disabilities that there is space for them in our workforce.

This happens by actively identifying and removing these barriers in our own companies.



For more of the latest disability and accessibility data, check out Statistics Canada's [Accessibility Statistics Hub](#).



Learn how Canuck Place Children's Hospice is making space for people with disabilities in their workplace by checking out [Talia Showers' Story with an Inclusive Employer](#).

# BENEFITS OF HIRING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

More diverse and inclusive workplaces average greater productivity, have consistently higher profits, and have an improved ability to anticipate change and innovate.

Employees with disabilities tend to stay with a company over a longer period of time and have both better attendance and performance than employees without disabilities.<sup>4</sup>

---

As a result of hiring disabled people, companies can see increased profits and cost-effectiveness.<sup>5</sup>

---

A workplace that reflects the diversity of your community helps to improve the perception of your brand and expand your consumer reach.

---

Individuals with disabilities understand the experiences and needs of others in their demographic in a way that people without lived experience of a disability cannot.

---

Hiring people with disabilities can offer intangible benefits, such as: increased job satisfaction, improved work climate and culture, better relationships between colleagues, a shared sense of responsibility, and improvements to their organization's reputation.<sup>6</sup>

---

## \$4,700

It can cost nearly \$4,700 for each new hire, so having great people on staff who will stick around is a compelling argument to tap into this labour pool.<sup>7</sup>

## 70%

Seventy percent of employers identified that the benefits of hiring people with disabilities outweighed the costs, especially training costs. As well, when people with disabilities were hired, the employee's impact on the work environment rated significantly better.<sup>8</sup>

## \$13 trillion

Hiring disabled people can improve product design and marketing strategies to help you tap into the \$13 trillion spending power of people with disabilities across the globe.<sup>9</sup>

# BUT WHAT ABOUT THE COST OF ACCOMMODATING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

To help cover the cost of necessary accommodations, Canadian employers have access to funding opportunities from the federal and provincial governments, as well as various organizations.



To learn more about funding opportunities to support businesses as they implement workplace accommodations for people with disabilities, check out the [List of Available Funding](#), curated by Small Business BC.

The most common accommodation requests are for flexible work arrangements, such as adjustments to job duties or working hours, which have no upfront costs.<sup>11</sup>

Organizations saw an economic benefit of 2 to 7 times the cost of accommodations for employees with various mental health disabilities.<sup>12</sup>

When you consider how to proactively create accessible organizations for everyone before accessibility issues arise, there will be less need to make accommodations for individuals.

## 56%

of accommodations for employees with disabilities cost nothing at all.

## 37%

involve a one-time expenditure with a median cost of \$300.<sup>10</sup>



Check out Accessible Employers' [Workplace Accommodation Guide](#).



Expanding your candidate pool is not something you need to do alone.

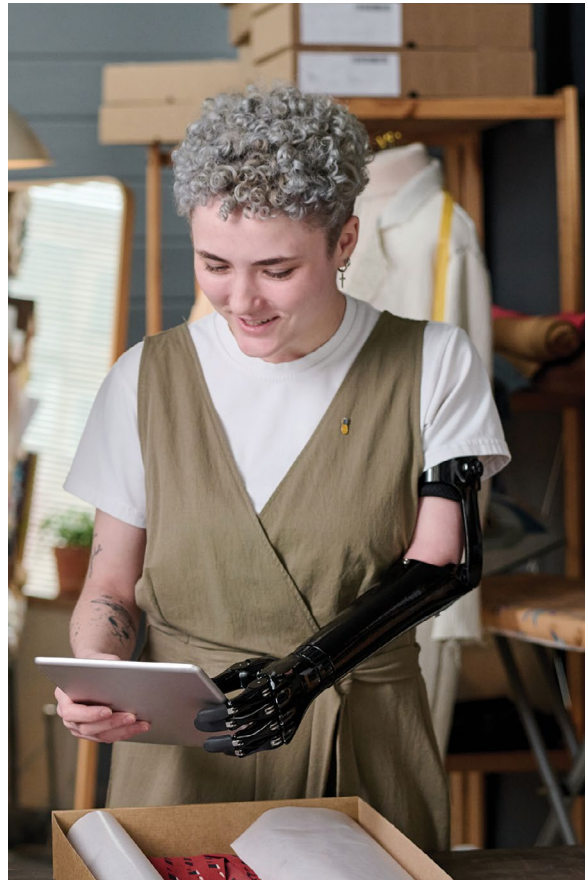
BC has a number of Disability Employment Service Organizations (DESOs) that can support your team in recruiting, hiring, accommodating, and onboarding people with disabilities. They can provide tailored, expert advice to set you up for success.



Check out our searchable [directory of DESOs](#) that can help you find people with disabilities for open roles.



More information about how to [select a DESO that's right for you](#).



“

**A culture of accommodation doesn't have to be about disability. It's just a general good practice. I always think that anything that I can do to keep my people happy and still with me saves me a ton of money. I don't have to retrain people.**

**Putting accommodations in place for anyone, disabled or not, is of net benefit to the company.”**

AARON CRUIKSHANK, PRESIDENT, CTRS MARKET INTELLIGENCE

# WHY ARE WE MEASURING FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION AND WHY SHOULD YOU?

## On the business side...

**Evidence-based business.** Consistent, long-term data collection gives you the ability to make informed decisions, meet your business goals, and gain insight into the gaps and inequalities that exist in your workplace.

**Fill gaps in data.** Existing disability data is limited, and what does exist is infrequent – like the [Canadian Survey on Disability](#), which only runs every five years. We need regular, reliable data, and by measuring and reporting publicly, we can help fill gaps in existing disability data. Generating your own internal data on employment equity for disabled people provides you with more freedom on the timelines and types of data collected, and will be more accurate and relevant to your organization.

“

**If you can't measure it, you can't improve it.”**

PETER DRUCKER

“

**It tells us where to focus our attention, and it becomes more than just a number – it becomes a number that we can action against, which enables us to do things.”**

MARY MARTIN, DIRECTOR, LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT, PACIFIC BLUE CROSS





“

**It wasn't until we did the Pledge to Measure that we really knew how many people who worked for us had a disability and the results blew my mind. When over 35% of our team members self-disclosed as having a disability, a number far beyond what we had expected, it gave us a better appreciation for how being an inclusive employer was truly attracting a diverse (and wonderful) workforce.”**

LISA BEECROFT, CO-OWNER, GABI & JULES



**Demonstrate your commitment.** From an employment perspective, measuring your efforts to employ people with disabilities is a clear way to model your commitment to accessibility. It also helps to meet the requirements of accessibility legislation like the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (2019) and the [Accessible BC Act](#) (2021).

**Improve organizational culture.** The act of collecting demographic data about your workforce and reporting back on how it is being used sends a message to staff that diversity and inclusion is a priority for your organization. When done intentionally, it can also support self-disclosure amongst staff which can prompt social change within the workplace and create a shift to more supportive attitudes and behaviours.

**Build your competitive advantage.** If you want to differentiate yourself from your competitors, why not gather numbers that prove you are leading your industry in employing people with disabilities? A verified commitment to diversity has been proven to help your brand and attract ethical consumers and better talent.



Check out [Accessible Employers' Inclusive Training Course: Create an Accessible Workplace](#) to learn how you can demonstrate your commitment beyond measurement initiatives, including your requirements under applicable legislation.



Check out [Accessible Employers' Inclusive Training Course: Lead Culture Change](#), to learn about improving organizational culture beyond your measurement initiative.



# 86%

of job seekers consider a potential employer's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in their job search.<sup>13</sup>



“

**We do want to see representation of people with disabilities in our workforce tick up year over year so that we can better offer necessary supports to team members and senior leaders who do self-identify with a disability or disabilities.”**

EMILY DIETRICH, DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAM MANAGER, BCAA

## On the social side...

**Raise awareness.** Data helps to raise awareness and identify trends that improve employers' and policymakers' understanding of the issues faced by disabled people, as well as how best to address them.<sup>14</sup>

**Combat stigma.** Data from employers provides more concrete evidence that people with disabilities make valuable contributions to their workplaces. By publicly sharing that your company employs disabled people and finds it important enough to measure, you encourage other companies to do the same.

**Spur innovation.** Getting new perspectives in the room that reflect the lived experience of different parts of the community creates more room for debate and exchange, which is proven to lead to better ideas and solutions.

“

**Hiring individuals from diverse backgrounds opens the door to fresh perspectives, fostering innovation and driving business growth and development.”**

ROOP JOHAL, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & SPONSORSHIP MANAGER, SMALL BUSINESS BC

“

**The Community of Accessible Employers brought forward by the Presidents Group is a wonderful resource for tools to integrate and leverage the talent of people with disabilities.”**

ERIC HOPKINS, PRESIDENT & CEO, BCAA



Learn about the experiences of senior leaders with disabilities at Small Business BC by checking out [Roop Johal's Story with an Inclusive Employer.](#)



CC BY 3.0 US Mapbox Uncharted ERG

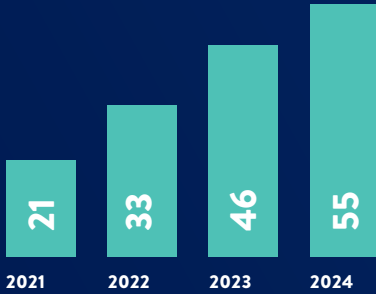
“

The queer community historically has a much higher rate of mental illness and likelihood of being disabled. It's important to account for that in the employee experience and in ensuring diversity of thought within the organization. I started Drag Me because I was frustrated and tired of working for organizations that placed people over profits and failed to account for the experience of their entire staff. I wanted to create an organization that I always wanted to work for, a place that allows folks to be their true selves and celebrates their diversity, using it to the organization's advantage as we strive to build products and a place for everyone.

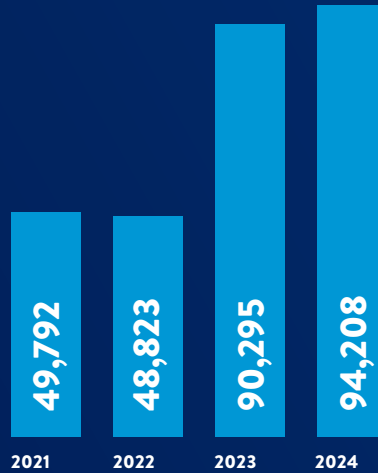
Given that diversity of thought and experience generates new ideas and points of view, why would you want to limit your company or product?”

AILSA BLAIR, FOUNDER &amp; CEO, DRAG ME INC.

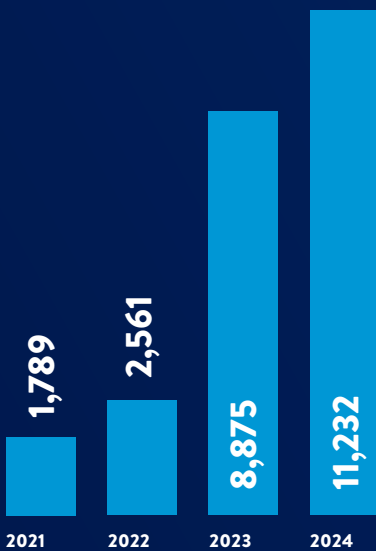
# OUR IMPACT



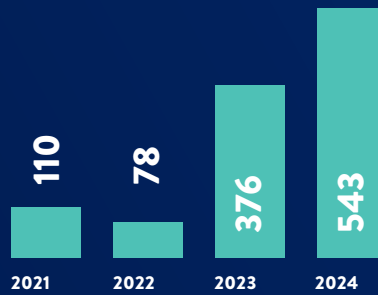
**PARTICIPATING EMPLOYERS**



**TOTAL NUMBER OF BC EMPLOYEES**



**EMPLOYEES SELF-IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A DISABILITY**



**SENIOR LEADERS SELF-IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A DISABILITY**



Check out the Pledge to Measure site for the most [up-to-date data](#) and [further breakdown](#).



**LOOKING TO  
BENCHMARK  
AGAINST  
PROVINCIAL  
DATA?**

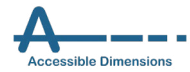
**773,670**

working age British  
Columbians (age 15-64)  
have a disability.<sup>15</sup>

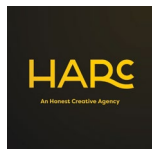
**590,270**

British Columbians with  
a disability are in the  
labour force.<sup>16</sup>

# 2024 PLEDGE TO MEASURE ORGANIZATIONS







# INTERSECTIONALITY IN MEASURING FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION

When we're talking about measuring for disability inclusion, we need to also be thinking about intersectionality.

## WHAT IS INTERSECTIONALITY?

Coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw and rooted in a history of Black feminist thought and activism, intersectionality is a tool to help us understand the unique impacts and experiences that result from the ways in which multiple forms of discrimination and oppression compound.

**“ It’s basically a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What’s often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts.”**

KIMBERLÉ CRENSHAW<sup>7</sup>

Intersectionality allows us to see how being part of more than one marginalized group can cause even greater discrimination, loss of opportunity, and exclusion. For example, a person with a disability who is also Indigenous and/or living at or below the poverty level, will likely face more rejection and negative attitudes from others than a white, income-secure, disabled person.

**“ Consider an analogy to traffic in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions. Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them.”**

KIMBERLÉ CRENSHAW<sup>8</sup>

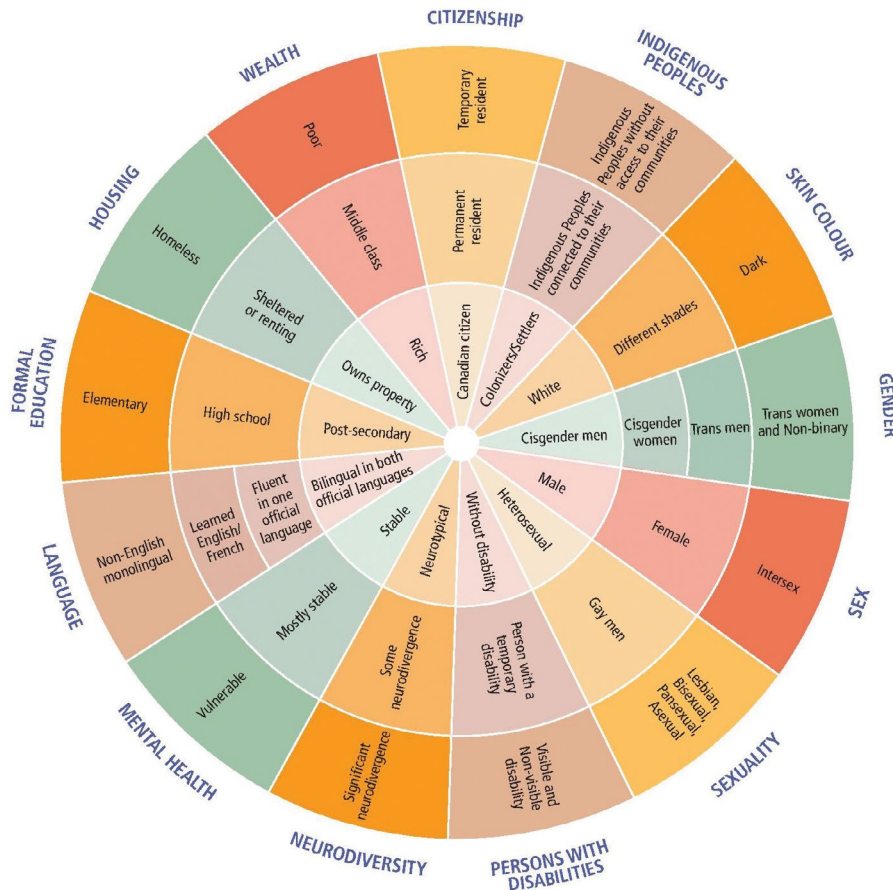


In the context of disability in the workplace, an intersectional lens helps us understand that our employees, colleagues, and senior leaders have multiple identities and may face various forms of discrimination, all of which must be considered.

The various ways that an individual could be marginalized are illustrated in the “wheel of intersectionality.”<sup>19</sup>



For more information about intersectionality and some tools for embedding intersectionality into policies, programs, and services, please see [The Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit](#).



**Note:** the categories within this wheel are only examples in the Canadian context, and we should not limit ourselves to them. Intersectionality is a broad concept, and this tool is only a beginning point.

# SO WHAT DOES INTERSECTIONALITY HAVE TO DO WITH MEASURING DISABILITY?

Let's take a moment and think about the purpose of measuring disability. At its core, disability measurement is a tool to support us in building more inclusive and accessible workplaces.

“ I want my team to also reflect our province and they can't do that if we aren't practicing what we preach and hiring folks with disabilities or hiring persons of color and Indigenous folks and queer folks and others. Representation matters. Seeing yourself reflected in community is important for everyone.”

TOM CONWAY, CEO, SMALL BUSINESS BC

But it's impossible to build inclusive and accessible workplaces if we aren't considering people's whole identities. If we only measure disability, we'll fail to have a complete picture of our workplaces and we risk leaving people out when we set targets and develop action plans to respond to the data.

“ Being disabled is just one facet of my identity. Like most folks, my identity is very intersectional; I'm a neurodiverse trans-non-binary queer who just so happens also to be an immigrant. Those other parts of my identity are important and often affect my day-to-day experience, as does being disabled. I think that if we focus on only one aspect of our identity, we miss understanding other parts of our identities that impact the entire lived experience. For example, I am white, so my experience will be vastly different from that of BIPOC folks also living with disabilities. To be truly inclusive, we have to look at intersectionality. We need to look at everyone's experience to account for everyone's experience.”

AILSA BLAIR, FOUNDER & CEO, DRAG ME INC.

It's also important to take an intersectional approach to *how* you measure for disability inclusion.

## Meet Farhad



Farhad is a data analyst with a financial services company. He uses a wheelchair because of a spinal cord injury from a car accident three years ago. Farhad is also Muslim and has ADHD.

Last year, Farhad's employer launched their first disability measurement initiative. They sent an email out to staff informing them about the survey, and a follow-up email with the survey itself.

Because the introductory email was sent during Ramadan, and the survey itself was sent on Eid, Farhad missed the opportunity to participate, as did the company's other Muslim employees.

Had his employer considered the timing of their campaign and developed a more robust information and engagement strategy, Farhad and his Muslim colleagues would have participated, and the company would have more accurate results.



To learn more about how you can create a more inclusive workplace by understanding and addressing that many disabled people also have other important identities that should be recognized and supported, check out [Accessible Employers' Advance Intersectional Equity for Employees with Disabilities course](#).

## SECTION TWO

# ADDRESS POTENTIAL CHALLENGES WHEN MEASURING FOR DISABILITY

This section identifies some of the common challenges that BC employers have run into when developing and implementing their own measurement initiatives.

While we can't name every potential challenge, in this section you'll be introduced to and provided solutions for the ones you're most likely to face so that you feel prepared.



## THE “WHO,” “WHERE,” & “WHY” CHALLENGES OF MEASURING FOR DISABILITY: YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Some of the challenges you may face when measuring for disability will be related to your organizational context. These can be the most challenging and time consuming to address, but doing so is critical and will have positive impacts beyond a successful measurement initiative.

The following pages identify common organizational challenges you may run into, with solutions and case study examples to help you apply your learning.



## ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE & TRUST

Creating a safe and inclusive organizational culture, rooted in trust, is a foundational requirement for a successful measurement initiative. If the level of trust in your organization is low and the culture is not completely inclusive, employees are less likely to self-identify as having a disability.

Because there is always a power dynamic in employment relationships, the onus for building a culture of trust rests with you as the employer.

# 96%

of disabilities are invisible.<sup>20</sup>

# 88%

of employees with invisible disabilities choose not to disclose it at work.<sup>21</sup>

Trust makes it easier to communicate what your organization is surveying on and why, helping you get accurate results.



“

The thing that might hold back that disclosure is the trust environment. If the trust isn't there, maybe somebody's got all kinds of ideas about what you're going to do with that information, and maybe they don't trust you to handle it responsibly.”

AARON CRUIKSHANK,  
PRESIDENT, CTRS MARKET INTELLIGENCE



Asking staff to disclose their disability status, even confidentially, requires a certain level of vulnerability and trust. A person's decision to disclose (or not disclose) is impacted not only by your organizational culture, but by societal factors, stigma, and their past experiences.

Improving organizational trust will support your measurement initiative, but it will also improve job satisfaction, productivity, and the reassurance that comes from a safe and inclusive work environment.

## SOLUTIONS

**Make accessibility improvements and support individuals that require accommodations.** Showing that you are “walking the talk” will build trust and make employees more likely to self-disclose. If you have an EDI or DEI department, consider adding an “A” for “Accessibility” to the name to show that you are also considering the needs of people with disabilities.

**Build relationships and create social connections.** Building relationships with your staff means creating a two-way dialogue. Employers who engage staff in an authentic way and listen well receive a high return on investment with their measurement campaigns.

**Create Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to provide support and resources for groups like people with disabilities, then use their expertise to champion the survey.** ERGs are groups created around a specific identity or experience within the workplace. They provide an avenue for staff with that identity to connect, support one another, and grow through personal and professional development opportunities. They can also be valuable feedback tools for employers seeking to address barriers in the workplace.

ERGs provide access to expertise specific to certain identities and experiences. It is important to consult your ERG for employees with disabilities, if you have one, in the design of your survey. ERGs are also a credible peer voice in the workplace and their endorsement of your measurement initiative will support you in getting the word out. Be sure to communicate results and discuss what next steps will be taken as a result of the feedback received from employees with your ERG after the survey is complete – this is an important step to show your commitment to accessibility and inclusion. If the results of the survey aren't used to make change, it is a waste of time and resources.



→ To learn how to remove barriers, address biases on the job, and promote a safe and understanding culture where employees with disabilities know their employer values them for who they are and their work, check out [Accessible Employers' Inclusive Training Course: Support Self Disclosure](#).

→ As you work to build relationships, look at your organizational structure and see where strong relationships already exist that can be built upon to boost engagement.



→ Learn about ICBC's Disability Inclusion Employee Resource Group in the [Make It Count: ICBC ERG Builds Awareness and Support](#) case study.

**Identify unofficial leaders and influencers and recruit them as champions.** Request the support of employees who are passionate about diversity and inclusion or those unofficial 'leaders and influencers' in the workplace who can encourage others to engage with company-wide diversity and inclusion initiatives. Be sure to acknowledge these individuals and celebrate their inclusion initiatives.

---

**Offer more opportunities for staff to connect with leadership.**

Opportunities for staff and leadership to get to know one another help everyone to see each other as individuals, and lead to better working relationships.

---

**Build staff and leadership awareness about diversity and inclusion and create space for discussion.** Arrange opportunities to learn about and celebrate diversity and inclusion, see new perspectives, and understand their own biases and behaviours. Make accessibility and inclusion part of your daily workflow.

BC Hydro's Accessibility Network (Employee Resource Group) hosted a lunch and learn on visible and invisible disabilities with testimonials of lived experience from employees. Over 250 employees attended this event and the feedback was resoundingly positive. The purpose of this event was to showcase invisible disabilities with the goal of removing stigma that some people with disabilities may face.

---



Leaders shape an organization's culture through their priorities, their behaviours, and how they create relationships.<sup>22</sup>



Check out our library of [free resources](#) to support your learning.

“

**Having leadership set the tone makes all the difference for the rest of the organization to feel confident and comfortable.”**

MELISSA ZIMMERMAN, VICE PRESIDENT OF PEOPLE & CULTURE, BC TRANSIT

**Align your measurement initiative with your organizational values.** Consider why you want to measure for disability and how the process fits into what you have already done around diversity and inclusion. Analyze what is already in play for your organization and build that into the “why” statement you will use to communicate the initiative.

If your organization prides itself on being data-driven, you might value how data decreases your reliance on bias in decision making and you could therefore collect disability data to improve your decision making around staffing.<sup>23</sup>

If your organization has recently undergone unconscious bias training, your measurement initiative can be framed as a way to uncover and counteract biases in hiring.



Check out [Accessible Employers' Inclusive Training Course: Lead Culture Change](#), to learn how to analyze your office space, leadership, and messages to see if you are accessible to people with disabilities.



## CHALLENGE TWO

# DECENTRALIZED AND DIVERSE WORKFORCE

For organizations with a decentralized and diverse workforce, their organizational structure can pose challenges for a successful measurement initiative. If your organization has multiple locations and departments, with dispersed staff and distinct chains of command, or variety in the types of working arrangements or kinds of roles your employees fill, you'll need to think creatively when rolling out and communicating company-wide diversity and inclusion initiatives.

## SOLUTIONS

**Engage decentralized staff through localized channels.** Messages that feel several steps removed from an employee's day-to-day responsibilities and chains of command are less meaningful, so rely on localized channels and existing relationships to communicate the importance of the results and how they will be used.

**Messaging from the top may not be the most effective strategy. Consider who really holds social capital in your organization.**

### **Survey staff in ways that fit into their daily workflows.**

While an online survey may be the simplest request to make of employees who spend their day sitting at a computer, it may be a challenge for retail staff, janitorial staff, or servers who do not spend time at a computer during their working hours.

**Examine workflows and operations to find key touchpoints with staff who are not in the office regularly. Adding perks for participation can boost employee engagement.**



Learn how UBC found points of connection to share their messaging in the [Make It Count: UBC Surveys Through Points of Connection](#) case study.



Learn about how TransLink communicated with and surveyed their staff based on key touchpoints in the [Make It Count: TransLink Surveys at Key Touchpoints](#) case study.



**Question your assumptions about how to survey and take it as an occasion to build community.** When your employees have a variety of needs based on how and where they work, it is especially important to question your assumptions about how your measurement or engagement methodology will land. Initial approaches often inadvertently leave someone out, so organizations must be willing to learn from each annual survey to find the best method for their workforce.

---

**Create opportunities for connection with remote workers – build a sense of community and facilitate communication of your measurement initiative.**

BCAA holds Town Halls where the CEO speaks directly to employees, both virtually and in-person at BCAA locations across the province. All in-person Town Halls are also streamed virtually to allow all team members to attend.

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## CHALLENGE THREE

# BUY-IN FROM GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Leaders drive organizational culture. Unless diversity and inclusion initiatives have backing from leadership, they often lack the funding, legitimacy, or energy to succeed.<sup>24</sup>

Generating buy-in from your board of directors and leadership teams creates the necessary foundation for measuring disability in your workforce. If your leadership is not on board, you may have some work cut out for you in terms of explaining why collecting employee demographic data is a best practice your organization should follow.

## SOLUTIONS

**Articulate the business case for measurement of disability and reference statistics.** While the social case may be of interest to some leaders from a values-driven perspective, it is always important to explain how leadership will see concrete positive results if they invest in a diversity and inclusion initiative like measuring for disability.

**Communicate how measuring for disability aligns with your organizational values.** An intimate understanding of what values your company promotes will help you to identify clear parallels.

**Clarify and present the goals of your measurement initiative.** The goals should be tailored to support your organization's strategic objectives, even if that is increasing revenue or shareholder value.

**Holding your managers accountable through diversity and inclusion related performance metrics can improve staff buy-in for your survey.**<sup>25</sup>



[‘Why are we measuring for disability inclusion and why should you?’](#), see page 14.



Check out the [Make It Count: Promoting Accountability at BC Hydro](#) case study.



For additional information and support, see [Performance Management to Support Inclusive Cultures](#).

**Demonstrate senior leadership's support for your diversity and inclusion initiatives in tangible ways.** Once you have the leader buy-in, ensure they champion the measurement initiative, and their support is communicated to staff. Leader-led diversity programs tend to stimulate higher staff engagement.<sup>26</sup>

However, a top-down approach will not automatically get you staff buy-in. Employees should be able to see clear benefits in the goals of the measurements initiative and feel their own experiences and values are reflected in the process and outcomes.

That's why your survey cannot be developed or rolled out in a vacuum. Ask for input and feedback from leadership and staff on the questions and definitions. Brainstorm possible applications of results.

---



Learn about how leadership at BCAA demonstrated their buy-in in the [Make It Count: BCAA Leads by Participation](#) case study.

Participation and vulnerability of your leadership team encourages staff engagement.

The opportunity to share stories increases awareness, builds trust, and even shifts attitudes in the workplace.

“

**We do workplace accessibility grants, we're working with small businesses all the time to help make the workplace accessible. People know that I identify with disabilities, and there are others on the team who are open about their disabilities. And so we're hopefully leading by example.”**

TOM CONWAY, CEO, SMALL BUSINESS BC

CHALLENGE  
FOUR

# HAVING NEVER TACKLED DISABILITY BEFORE

For many organizations, disability is the last piece of the diversity puzzle to tackle. We often hear employers say, “We’ve been doing diversity and inclusion work, but we haven’t been thinking about disabilities.” And despite the fact that one in four Canadians have a disability, there is often a hesitancy around taking action due to a lack of understanding of the needs of this demographic at work.<sup>27</sup>

Given the prevalence of disability, your employees may appreciate being given the space to talk about their personal experiences and their knowledge gaps related to disability.

## SOLUTIONS

**Educate your HR or diversity and inclusion team on disability and accessibility, and spread that knowledge throughout your workforce.**

**Use your organization’s lack of work on disability inclusion as an opportunity to establish a baseline.** Understanding the level of representation in your workforce can help track your progress as you implement new initiatives to support people with disabilities.

**Use what you’ve learned from other diversity and inclusion programs to better roll out your disability measurement initiative.** You may have valuable insight about your employee needs from work you’ve previously done to support racial, religious, or gender equity in the workplace. This information can provide valuable insight into how best to develop and initiate your disability measurement initiative.

# 90%

of employers say diversity and inclusion is a priority, however, only 4% were working to become more inclusive of the disability community.<sup>28</sup>



Check out our library of [free resources](#) to support your learning.





To address any hesitancy around taking action due to a lack of understanding of the needs of this demographic at work, make sure to tap into the many resources [Accessible Employers](#) has developed to support employers.

Our website holds many checklists, case studies, and tools you'll find helpful in your journey to disability confidence.

## THE “HOW” CHALLENGES OF MEASURING FOR DISABILITY: YOUR MEASUREMENT INITIATIVE

You may run into challenges when developing key components of your measurement initiative. These can be related to decisions about how and how often to survey your employees, creating a communications strategy, and determining the most appropriate method for data collection.

The following pages identify common measurement initiative challenges you may face, with solutions and case study examples to help you apply your learning.





**CHALLENGE  
ONE**

# EMPLOYEE SURVEY FATIGUE

You may be worrying about employee survey fatigue and low engagement due to regular staff surveying. If the number of survey responses is low, the results will not be representative of your workforce, and your data won't be reliable. But you can also think of the response rate as another piece of data that can help you improve how you conduct future surveys and engage your staff.

Most companies that begin measuring have a low response rate in their first years. Through sustained efforts, norms and expectations will shift in a workplace. You will likely discover ways your approach can be adjusted to achieve better response rates over time.

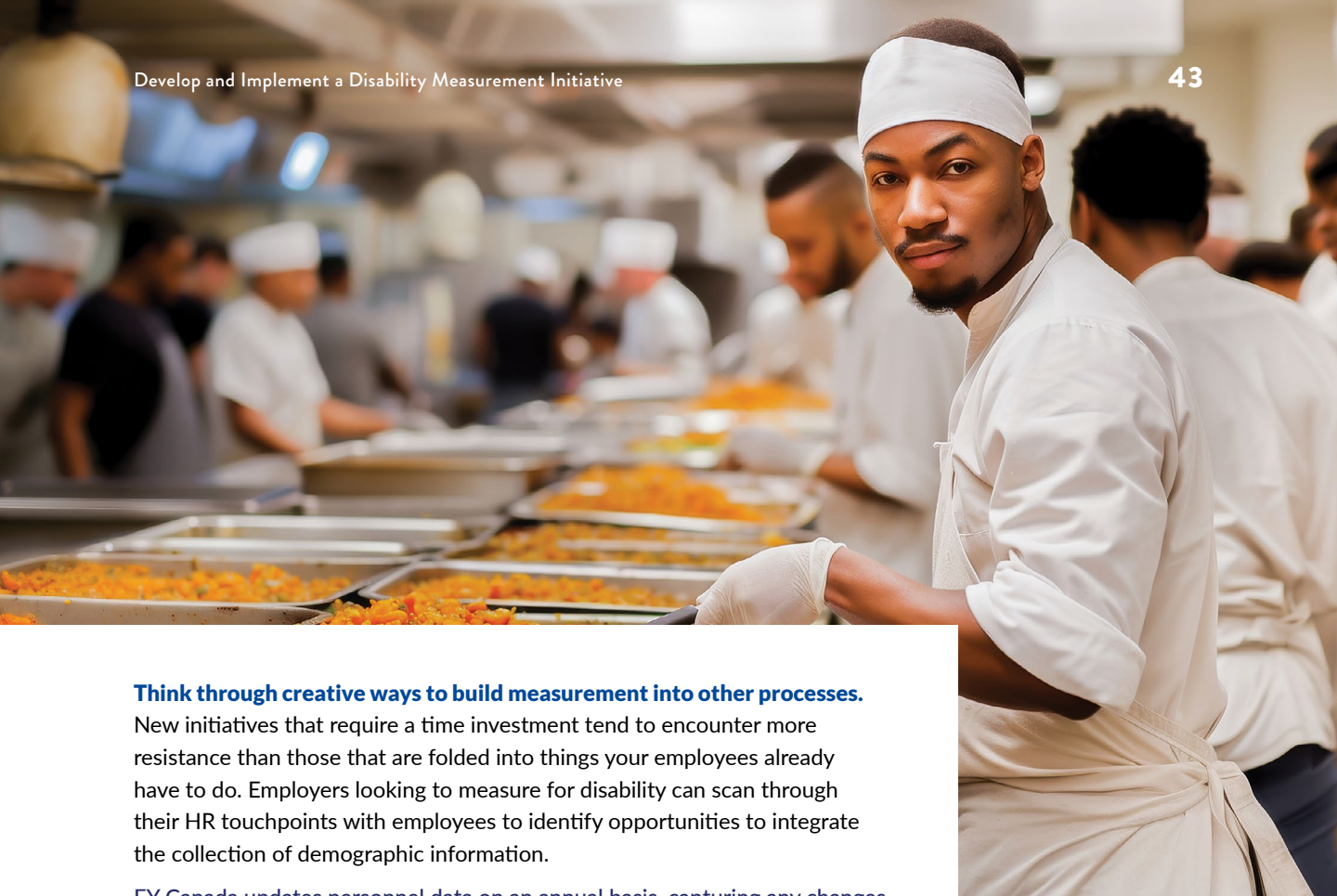
## SOLUTIONS

**Listen and report back to underscore the value of your measurement initiatives.** If you are listening, you will understand employees' workplace concerns and how measurement can help address that. By reporting back, you demonstrate that the initiative is not an arbitrary task they need to complete, but that your team derives value from each person's engagement and is taking action based on the results.

When you ask employees to provide personal information or add diversity and inclusion engagement to their to-do list, your responsibility is to take their feedback and show they have been heard. Use this information to make change.

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**Think through creative ways to build measurement into other processes.**

New initiatives that require a time investment tend to encounter more resistance than those that are folded into things your employees already have to do. Employers looking to measure for disability can scan through their HR touchpoints with employees to identify opportunities to integrate the collection of demographic information.

EY Canada updates personnel data on an annual basis, capturing any changes to employees' addresses, contact information, dependents, or emergency contacts. Instead of circulating a separate survey, EY has found it most effective to ask staff to fill out a demographic survey at the same time that they update their personal information.

Vancity has an internal HR portal where employees can update their personnel data at any time. Each year Vancity runs a two-week campaign called iCount, during which employees are encouraged to update their demographic data on the portal. The iCount campaign involves significant engagement activities, meetings, and communication pieces, and has achieved an 80% participation rate. Employees are only asked to respond if they have had a change to their demographics data, such as an acquired disability or a gender transition.

In BCAA's first year measuring for disability inclusion, they implemented a specific DEI survey that was closely followed by their employee experience survey. In analyzing their employees' survey engagement, they learned that a more effective approach was to collect their demographic data through their Human Resources Information System (HRIS) alongside an information and engagement campaign encouraging staff to self-identify. Since the pivot to their current approach, BCAA has seen response rates increase tremendously.

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## CHALLENGE TWO

# DATA PROTECTION CONCERNS

One of the biggest concerns that staff may raise in response to being introduced to a measurement initiative will be around data protection.

The need to manage this information in an ethical and transparent fashion is arguably the most important responsibility of an employer collecting any personal data from employees.

If your employees are not confident that you are being transparent or that you will keep their disability status confidential, they will be less willing to self-identify. And why should they? Just like you had to be sold that measuring for disability was important, you need to think about how to sell it to your staff, and what works with the organizational culture you've established.

## SOLUTIONS

**Be transparent about how the information will be used and processed.** The communications piece is important here. You need to explain how the data will be collected, processed and stored, as well as who will see it.

**Adhere to strict data protection standards and communicate those to employees.** Ensure the parameters around who sees the data and in what format is clearly communicated to promote trust in the initiative

Vancity elects to run their survey internally and tie their data to their human resource management systems. To protect confidentiality, demographic data is only available to the HR team in aggregate form and nothing is shared with managers or colleagues. Details around data access are communicated through a two-week engagement and educational campaign in advance of the survey.

Who will see this information?

Where will my information be stored?

Will my privacy be protected?

Will I somehow be treated differently if I self-identify?



**Collect anonymous data to ensure responses cannot be traced back to employees.** Regardless of whether the survey is conducted in paper ballot format or online, it is important to ensure employees' responses cannot be traced back to them.

That means not collecting their disability status alongside any information that could be used to identify your employees, such as their name, employee number, or email address, and not tracking click-throughs on the company listserv.

**If you collect data around multiple demographic points, be mindful of how data is analyzed and presented to avoid unintentionally identifying an employee based on their demographic profile.**

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**Use a third-party collector.** A third party collector helps remove the concerns that managers will learn an employee's disability status or that the survey could impact an employee's career prospects, encouraging your staff to feel comfortable disclosing, and possibly provide more sophisticated data analysis than your internal resources would allow. However, this option might not be suitable for your business.

**While a third party data collector might not be right for you, it can address concerns about disclosure impacting an individual's treatment at work.**

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**Ensure participation is voluntary and you have a 'decline to answer' option.** Participation must be voluntary. If employees do not feel comfortable participating, they should have every opportunity to opt-out of disclosing by including a 'decline to answer' option.

**If you see a large percentage of 'decline to answer' responses, you can use that as a data point, as it may suggest an unclear question or low trust in the initiative and its data protection.**

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['How do we measure disability inclusion?'](#)  
see page 53.



Learn about BCAA's experience with a third party collector in the [Make It Count: BCAA Creates Distance from Data](#) case study.

CHALLENGE  
THREE

# CAPTURING ACQUIRED DISABILITIES

The majority of disabilities are acquired disabilities. These are impairments that an individual is not born with, meaning that the rate of disability in a population changes throughout people's lives. Your employees' disability status or their understanding of that status might change over time.

Such changes won't be captured by employers that only collect demographic data as part of their onboarding processes, so their official number of staff with disabilities could be artificially low.

Given the stigma and biases employees with disabilities experience, new employees might not feel comfortable disclosing their disability status. The perceived risk of self-identification may be highest for new employees, as they are unsure of the organizational culture and have few pre-existing relationships in the workplace. Unless a new hire absolutely requires accommodations to do their job, employers are unlikely to hear about their disability at the outset of the employment relationship.

# 80%

of disabilities are acquired between the ages of 18 and 64.<sup>29</sup>





## SOLUTIONS

**Survey annually or offer an open-ended survey to capture any acquired disabilities in your workforce.** Conducting an annual survey or leaving your survey open-ended takes into account that lives and identities are not static and helps mitigate the uncertainty new employees might feel around disclosure by giving employers a chance to earn their trust.

Vancity has an open-ended survey on their HR platform that employees can update at any time throughout the year.

From a data standpoint, conducting an annual survey keeps your numbers accurate and relevant, as well as aligned with the rhythm of other metrics, so you can use them to support decision-making. When scheduling your survey period, consider your company's budget writing cycles, annual reports and conferences.

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**Sync your Return to Work programs with your measurement initiatives.** It can be valuable to capture data on how many people go on short-term disability leave in your organization, and how many accommodations are provided to new or returning employees. Employees returning to work may or may not have experienced a change in their disability status. To align your return to work with your measurement initiative, employees returning to work should be reminded to update any changes to their personnel information or to participate in the next survey.

Some organizations have a return-to-work program to support injured employees in reintegrating into their former or adjusted roles with whatever accommodations are needed, but the program might be housed under a distinct department, such as risk management. Coordination between all departments that support your employees with disabilities is key for maintaining reliable data and ensuring staff receive the support they need.

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CHALLENGE  
FOUR

# BARRIERS TO DISCLOSURE

Disability measurement initiatives rely on self-identification, which means asking staff to share whether or not they identify as having a disability.

Employees with conditions classified as disabilities may not identify that way and may not count themselves in the survey. In other cases, individuals do not feel like their condition results in barriers to their full and equal participation, and may not believe themselves to have a disability. Different demographics may also respond to survey questions differently as everyone understands their identities in a unique and contextualized way.

Employees may, for instance, be turned off by a poor representation of their identities in survey questions and decline to answer. There are also many other reasons a person may choose not to self-identify, including lack of trust in the organization, security of data, or personal reasons.

**Regardless of why a person chooses not to self-identify, their choice should be respected.**

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## 3.7%

On average, only 3.7% of workers have disclosed their disability to their employer at any point.<sup>30</sup>

Accessible Employers is working to change this in Canada with the Pledge to Measure!





## SOLUTIONS

**Educate staff on disability to improve their understanding of whether or not they should self-identify.**

**Conduct testing on the wording of survey questions and definitions to ensure inclusivity.** The definition of disability you use is important. Strive to be as inclusive and thoughtful in your approach as possible, which may require staff feedback.

**Strive to have representation of people with disabilities at all levels of the organization.** If leaders of the organization are modeling disclosure of their disability, others will follow suit. If your stakeholders and customers who have disabilities see themselves within your organization, they are more likely to apply for jobs and self-disclose when hired.



To learn how to remove barriers, address biases on the job, and promote a safe and understanding culture where employees with disabilities know their employer values them for who they are and their work, check out Accessible Employers' [Inclusive Training Course: Support Self Disclosure](#).

→ Check out our library of [free resources](#) to support you.

→ It is prudent to test definitions and consult an expert- you can also borrow or adapt our plain language definition. (['What is a disability?'](#), see page 9).

CHALLENGE  
FIVE

# MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY IN A SMALL BUSINESS

Maintaining confidentiality can be a challenge for smaller businesses. Having a smaller team increases familiarity between staff members, making it easier to determine who may have self-identified when results are reported back or more comfortable for staff to ask their colleagues how they responded to the survey.

The same logic applies to protecting senior leaders, though some leaders may choose to take the survey as an opportunity to champion the cause.

## SOLUTIONS

**Guide your staff in establishing rules and confidentiality and respect for privacy.**

Remember that someone's disability status is their story to share. Do not treat the topic of disability as taboo. Set the expectation that fellow staff members treat disability status and disclosure with respect and dignity.<sup>31</sup>

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**Only share general and aggregate data.**<sup>32</sup> Regardless of how you collect data on disability or other demographics, do not provide breakdowns by department, role type, or other categories that would allow for speculation amongst staff.

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**Report data collectively with a few other small businesses.** Consider joining together with a few partners when reporting data and connect annually to review aggregate numbers.

**Reporting collectively with a few other small businesses can provide added accountability towards the goals of increasing employment of disabled people.**

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## SECTION THREE

# ARE YOU IN? HERE'S HOW YOU DO IT!

In this section, we introduce you to the basics of measuring for disability inclusion and the decisions you need to make, followed by four simple steps for your organization to take to measure disability in your workplace.



# MEASURE DISABILITY INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

## The basics

### WHAT

Measuring for disability inclusion in the workplace involves asking staff members to complete a survey that asks them to voluntarily disclose whether or not they identify as having a disability. This is called the voluntary, self-identification model.

### WHO

Survey everyone who collects a paycheck at your company. Even if they are not full-time or permanent staff, your company is employing them. You risk undercounting your actual numbers if these employment types are omitted.

It's important to measure the rate of disability in your senior leadership team, as well as in your staff more generally because of the stigma and barriers that people with disabilities face in getting hired and promoted.

**When a senior leader shares their disability status, they powerfully combat the stigma disabled people face. They show they have built a successful career despite the barriers. Their courage makes space for others to speak openly about it too.**

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**With the Pledge to Measure, we are aiming to identify two data points:**

01. The number of people on staff who identify as having a disability; and
02. The number of senior leaders who identify as having a disability.



## WHEN

It may be tempting to only ask staff members to complete a demographic survey as part of their onboarding, but it is best practice to survey your employees annually.

An alternative is an open-ended survey that allows staff to update their demographic information as it changes over time.

## HOW

We've identified five common data collection methods:

### 01. A digital survey using the Accessible Employers' Qualtrics platform

#### Benefits of Using a digital platform

Automated counting and report generation.

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Removes some potential for human error in counting manually.

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Sophisticated data representation and visualization options, with quick access to pull relevant data.

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### 02. Paper ballots

#### Benefits of Using a Paper Ballots

Low cost and simple execution.

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Protection of information through anonymity.

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#### Drawbacks of Using a digital platform

Increased cost for use of some platforms.

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Privacy concerns need to be addressed.

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May not be appropriate for employees who do not work at a computer.

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#### Drawbacks of Using a Paper Ballots

High time investment with manual counting and tracking, and an associated potential for human error.

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May not be appropriate for dispersed teams with remote employees.

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### 03. Incorporate questions into larger D&I survey

### 04 Download data from internal employee data/ HRIS system

### 05. Direct check-in with staff

Using the direct check-in with staff method is appropriate for smaller businesses with high organizational trust and immense psychological safety.

## CONTRACTING TO A THIRD PARTY

You may choose to manage the entire process internally or contract a third party to design and administer the survey. Consider your organizational context, including internal HR capacity, budget, and presumed level of organizational trust.

### Benefits of Contracting to a Third Party

Can address privacy concerns.

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Receive reports and insights generated and interpreted by experts.

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### Drawbacks of Contracting to a Third Party

Highest cost option.

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Time investment and risk involved in finding a third party firm you trust.

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# PLEDGE TO MEASURE AT A GLANCE



## **STEP 1. JOIN THE PLEDGE TO MEASURE**

- 1.1 Connect with Accessible Employers about your intention to join the Pledge.
- 1.2 Create a “why” for your organization.

## **STEP 2. DECIDE ON DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY**

- 2.1 Evaluate your organizational context and consider employee needs.
- 2.2 Let Accessible Employers know your data collection method.

## **STEP 3. GATHER INSIGHTS**

- 3.1 Make an internal communications plan.
- 3.2 Use the Pledge to Measure Toolkit with over 50 pages of plain language survey details, survey templates, email templates, FAQs, presentations, and more.
- 3.3 Gather data using one of the five data collection methods.
- 3.4 Share data back to Accessible Employers.

## **STEP 4. SHARE YOUR PROGRESS!**

- 4.1 Share progress with your internal and external audiences.
- 4.2 Use the support and graphics provided to amplify your accomplishments each year.

Learn about each of these steps in more detail on the following pages!

# JOIN THE PLEDGE TO MEASURE!

## 1.1 Connect with Accessible Employers about your intention to join the Pledge to Measure

The very first thing you can do to get started on your measurement journey is connect with Accessible Employers about your intention to join the Pledge to Measure. We are so excited to welcome you and can be a valuable resource as you work to develop, administer, and report back on disability in your workplace!

## 1.2 Create a “why” for your organization

As you begin, it’s important to understand why you want to measure disability, and how the process fits into what you have already done around diversity and inclusion. But why do you need a “why”? Having a clearly articulated “why” statement:

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Underpins any communications and messaging to stimulate staff and leader buy-in;

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Provides the rationale as to why you are asking for personal information;

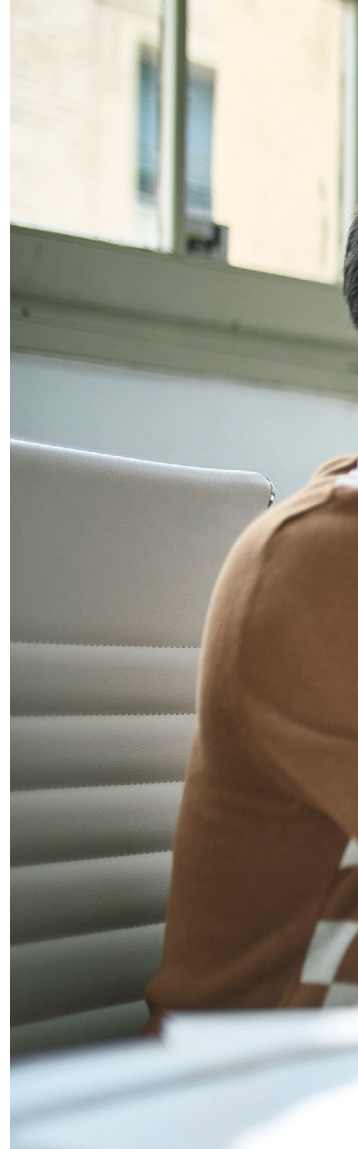
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Helps your organization get clear on what you can do with the data you collect;

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Helps ensure you are designing a process that achieves what you are setting out to do.

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“

**Small Business BC is honoured to once again participate in the annual Pledge to Measure and be part of the growing list of businesses committed to hiring people and improving representation of persons who identify with a disability. Small businesses account for 98% of all businesses in BC and employ over 1.1 million people. With one-in-four Canadians identifying with at least one disability, that translates to more than 284,000 folks in BC who work for a small business, and they all deserve to be counted!”**

TOM CONWAY, CEO, SMALL BUSINESS BC

# DECIDE ON DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

## 2.1 Evaluate your organizational context

Your organizational context will inform a number of key decisions you make around delivering the survey, communicating with staff, and designing your engagement strategy.

### Assess the level of trust

Do you have a high trust culture where employees feel they:

Can respectfully disagree with leadership without fear of reprisal?

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Understand and are engaged in achieving organizational goals and implementing a shared vision?

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Can professionally express their identities without fear of being harassed, excluded, or passed over for opportunities?

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Are able to make and learn from mistakes?

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Believe leaders take responsibility for their mistakes?

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Tend to maintain high morale on the team, even in difficult times?

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These are hard questions and a lot of organizations are not there yet. It takes significant time and investment to build mutual trust. If you suspect your organization has low levels of trust, consider engaging a third party to administer your survey. You can also leverage your measurement initiative as a way to build trust by following through on related programming.

### Asses your organizational structure

Is your organization complex and dispersed?

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Does your team have the capacity to develop and deliver this initiative yourselves?

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What are your channels for communication and coordination with employees?

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Where do authority and influence lie?

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Is your organization open or resistant to change?

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### Identify your project manager

Who in your organization will be responsible for delivering the survey and collecting results?

It is best to have a single point person, even if others are assigned to assist in the roll out of the survey.

Be cautious of making your staff survey on disability a voluntary side project, particularly in a large organization, because it could get deprioritized.

---

### Identify key internal stakeholders

What other departments do you need to get support from before communicating your measurement initiative to all staff?

If applicable, it is especially important to enlist your organization's privacy officer or legal department early on in the project-scoping phase to ensure alignment with policies and legislation. Your finance team will likely need to be engaged in budgetary decisions. Marketing colleagues might be involved in shaping communications.

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**Your measurement initiative will benefit from leaning on internal expertise about how your organization works, and early engagement creates champions for the project who can generate buy-in from their peers.**

## 2.2 Consider employee needs

Depending on your role at their organization, employees may require different engagement systems, including email, telephone, or in-person. Consider who you have on staff and what they might need to understand the survey and all the implications related to their participation.

Also consider the accessibility of your survey and ensure that everyone can easily access it.

**Don't forget about employees who are away on leave during the surveying period! We recommend finding a way to engage staff on disability or parental leave to promote more accurate data.**

Word questions simply to ensure everyone is able to understand. For some workplaces, this means writing at no higher than a grade six level.



You may want to refer to the BC Government's [Plain Language Checklist](#).

Ensure that your survey is written in inclusive language and that it doesn't include any outdated or offensive language.



Check out our [Disability Inclusive Language Guide](#).

Where appropriate, such as when some of your employees speak English as a second language, ask if they would prefer surveys and associated materials translated to their preferred languages.

Providing the survey in the language your employees are most comfortable speaking ensures staff understand what you are asking of them, which is a concern both from an ethical and data reliability standpoint.

There are many translation and interpretation services available for businesses.



[Mosaic](#) is a Vancouver-based non-profit that offers affordable translation and live interpretation services for businesses in a variety of languages.



[Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre](#) offers live interpretation for American Sign Language that could support any informational meetings or educational workshop accompanying your survey campaign.





Some staff may require decision-making support, such as employees with cognitive or learning disabilities. To support these employees to participate and fill out the survey accurately, consider connecting with their employment services organization, job coach, or family member who can provide direction based on the individual's needs.

**The Pledge to Measure Toolkit has a sample letter you can customize to write to an employment services organization, job coach, or family member to call in the support your employee needs to meaningfully participate in the survey.**

→ You'll get your copy of the Pledge to Measure Toolkit when you sign up for the Pledge to Measure!

## 2.3 Let Accessible Employers Know Your Data Collection Methodology

Once you've evaluated your organizational context and considered your employees' needs, decide on what data collection methodology is most appropriate for you. A breakdown of data collection methods can be found here, '[How do we measure disability inclusion?](#)', see page 53.

Then, just let us know what you decided! This helps us understand how folks are engaging with the Pledge and allows us to better support you and other organizations in our movement to measure.



→ Learn about BC Hydro's experience working with a third party collector in the [Make It Count: BC Hydro Outsources Data Collection](#) case study.

STEP  
THREE

# GATHER INSIGHTS

## 3.1

### Make an internal communications plan

The most successful measurement initiatives are accompanied by an engagement and education campaign to support the collection of accurate data through self-identification.

**Remember, your employees are busy with competing priorities, so their engagement should be made easy and straightforward.**

→ Communications resources are available in the Pledge Toolkit!

It is important to ensure there are multiple communications to alert staff to the survey, explain why you are surveying them, how and when you will move forward, and answer any questions they might have.

#### How do you want to inform staff about the initiative?

Use a variety of methods for engaging staff to ensure the message is received.

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Use existing channels for communicating with staff to support your measurement initiative's success.

**It is best to work communications about the initiative into existing structures, because you are reaching staff where they are already spending time and through methods they are familiar with.**

---

“

**It does help to have a personal appeal and a reminder to people of the importance of this and that we're not keeping this information to ourselves.”**

TOM CONWAY, CEO, SMALL BUSINESS BC

Make ongoing, direct, and personal appeal to employees. Some employers find it most effective to announce the survey with an email or memo, and then follow up in a staff meeting to address employee concerns, while others find that it is most effective to focus on making multiple direct, face-to-face requests for participation.

---

Create a Frequently Asked Questions document to accompany your initial outreach to staff that will address some of the common questions or objections that might arise.

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Consider whether there are other points of contact you missed and if so, how you can get creative in using them to engage your staff. There are often many channels to experiment with, but some could require collaboration with different departments.

In organizations where employees manually fill out a timesheet or pick up a physical paystub, there's a possibility of attaching a notice or reminder to fill out the survey by the given date.

If supervisors review employees' weekly work plans in one-on-one meetings, staff can be asked to add completing the survey to their work plan.

Each touchpoint is an opportunity to educate staff on the definition of disability, how their information will be protected, and what your team will ultimately do with the data.

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### What is your timeline

Begin communications several weeks prior to administering the survey. This emphasizes the level of importance your organization is placing on collecting accurate and reliable data on disability.

Don't forget to keep track of Accessible Employers' annual deadline to ensure your data is compiled alongside 100,000 other BC employees'.

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Conduct engagement and communications activities each year prior to the administration of the survey. This will account for the education of new hires, and provide a valuable refresher for employees who have had a longer tenure at your organization.



Check out this best practice example of communicating a measurement initiative to staff from Vancity in the [Make It Count: Vancity Campaigns for Survey Engagement case study](#).

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## 3.2 Use the Pledge Toolkit

The Pledge to Measure Toolkit is a free resource with over 50 pages of resources, including plain language survey details, survey templates, email templates, FAQs, presentations, and more.

### What's included:

Tools for implementation, including a survey template and a sample letter to employment service organizations, job coaches, or family members for employees requiring decision-making support.

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Tools for internal communications, including a staff memo, FAQs, internal newsletter messaging, and a dialogue guide and slide deck.

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The resources address all aspects of implementation of the Pledge to Measure and are designed to be easily customized to your specific organizational context.

If you have questions about the Toolkit or need connection to other resources, you can contact Accessible Employers at [info@accessibleemployers.ca](mailto:info@accessibleemployers.ca).

We also encourage you to share your feedback with us on how these tools worked for your organization.

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You'll get your copy of the Pledge to Measure Toolkit when you sign up for the Pledge to Measure!

## 3.3 Gather data using one of the five data collection methods

After you've decided on your data collection methodology and developed your internal communications plan, it's time to put everything into action and begin gathering data!



Check out the annual [Impact Report](#) that compares and celebrates your organization's data alongside all other participants'.

## 3.4 Share data back to Accessible Employers

**STEP  
FOUR**

# SHARE YOUR PROGRESS

## 4.1

### Share progress with your internal and external audiences

A critical step in the process is reporting back. By reporting back to your employees, you demonstrate that the initiative is not an arbitrary task they need to complete, but that your team derives value from each person's engagement and is taking action based on the results.

By reporting publicly, you extend the values of transparency and accountability that will drive you to deliver better results.<sup>33</sup>

## 4.2

### Amplify your accomplishments each year

Just like we're here to support you with developing and implementing your measurement initiative, we can also be a great resource for you to celebrate and amplify your accomplishments each year.

“

**If we want to hire people with disabilities, we should be transparent about how many people here work with them – so it's important to keep these metrics current.”**

ANDRIA INK, PROGRAM MANAGER,  
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, BC HYDRO



# RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

Accessible Employers has a library of free resources to give you the tools you need to move on to the next stage in your journey to make your organization more accessible and inclusive.



Check out our [Inclusive Training courses](#), along with other continuing education opportunities.



Check out our '[Spotlight on Disability in the Workplace](#)' series, promoting accessible employment opportunities in BC, along with other success stories.



Read real life [case studies](#) from BC-based employers.



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## Learn More

These are just some of the resources we've developed and curated to support you in your accessibility and inclusion journey. Visit our [resource page](#) for more.

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