



## Six Tips for Encouraging Self-Identification

Research conducted in recent years has brought to light a number of strategies employers can use to foster an inclusive work culture, one in which applicants and employees with disabilities feel comfortable and supported in self-identifying. These include:

- 1** | Communicate why you are asking employees to disclose. For example, if the company will benefit from having a workforce that mirrors the company's target market, which includes people with disabilities, explain such. Share the ways that self-identification will benefit the company as a whole and invite employees to be part of the company's journey toward greater inclusiveness.
- 2** | Provide disability etiquette and awareness training for managers and employees at all levels to promote acceptance and understanding of disability. In turn, this will help develop a "disability confident" workplace.
- 3** | Communicate the definition of disability as set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act and share illustrative examples with employees throughout the application and employment process. One of the reasons employees with disabilities don't self-identify is that they may not realize they qualify as having a disability.
- 4** | Ensure that employees have multiple avenues to disclose their disabilities, allowing for anonymity or self-identification by name, and regularly refer to these avenues in company communications about diversity and inclusion.
- 5** | Be up front about the ways in which the information will be used if an employee discloses that they have a disability and explain how anonymity or confidentiality will be protected. Monitor that these protections are maintained.
- 6** | When asking employees with disabilities to self-identify, be sure to communicate the ways in which disclosing disability can benefit them. Unless employees are seeking accommodations, they may think long and hard about the risks versus benefits of self-identifying, even anonymously. As such, companies should be able to explain the benefits, including access to resources, accommodations and a community of other employees with disabilities.

It is important to note that invitations to self-identify as individuals with disabilities are permissible only when the question is being asked for affirmative action purposes such as those prescribed by Section 503 or a voluntarily adopted program.

For more information about disability self-identification, see the following:



### ***Do Ask, Do Tell: Encouraging Employees with Disabilities to Self-Identify:***

This report, published by The Conference Board with support from the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN), was developed based on a survey of 98 companies and in-depth interviews with disability experts. It is available on the EARN website at [AskEARN.org](http://AskEARN.org).



### ***Do Ask, Do Tell: Tapping the Power of Disability Diversity & Encouraging Self-Identification:***

This webinar, held in February 2016, explored strategies for achieving disability inclusion goals under Section 503 by helping employees with disabilities understand the value of self-identification. An archived version is available on [AskEARN.org](http://AskEARN.org) under "Past Events."