



<https://www.globaldisabilityinclusion.com/post/30-things-to-do-to-celebrate-the-30th-anniversary-of-the-americans-with-disabilities-act>

30 Awesome Things to Celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Americans With Disabilities Act

Updated: May 28

Over the next several months we are going to spend a lot of time talking about and celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which is July 26, 2020.

Many of our clients have begun asking, “*What can we do to recognize and celebrate the ADA anniversary?*” So, we put together a list of 30 things – some are small, easy activities that can be done quickly, others will require some effort and planning, so we encourage you to get started early. Pick what works for you and your company and don’t be afraid to be innovative and come up with your own ideas!

Celebrate the ADA: 30 Things You Can Do

- 1. Take a Disability Inclusion Webinar:** Take a one-hour webinar on disability inclusion. Leaders, ask your team members to join you in learning something new to amp up the opportunities for educating others about disability inclusion.
- 2. Review Diversity & Inclusion Statements/Mission:** Take a look at how you talk about disability in your workplace. Think less compliance and more inclusion.
- 3. Get Social:** Utilize your social media platforms to talk about disability inclusion. Post articles, events and inclusion tips. Use the [#ADA30](#) and [#DisabilityInclusion](#) or [#InclusionMeansEveryone](#) hashtags.
- 4. Review the Diversity Page on your Website:** Review your D&I page and assess how you talk about people with disabilities. Do you feature employees with disabilities in comments, or videos? Do videos have closed captioning or open captioning demonstrating inclusion and access? Identify opportunities to improve how you feature disability as a diversity segment your organization is focused on.
- 5. Review Accessibility:** Review/audit the accessibility of your locations --this means physical accessibility as well as digital accessibility. You can hire an expert, but your disability ERG/BRG can likely be helpful here as well.
- 6. Review Job Descriptions:** Take a good look at your job descriptions and compare them to the actual job task. Often job descriptions are outdated and have requirements that are no longer valid. Review them for accuracy and inclusive language.

7. Audit Your Accommodations Process: Test the process. Have a “mystery shopper” make an accommodation request to really understand how it works, how long it takes, who is involved, and how employees with disabilities are treated during the process. Make changes after the review. Simplify the process as much as possible.

8. Train Your Recruiters: Train all recruiters on effective management of candidates with disabilities. Ensure they know how to provide accommodations quickly and how to educate hiring managers about interviews with candidates with disabilities that might be different from the "average" interview. For example, how to work with a sign language interpreter, letting them know someone has a service dog, or interviewing someone on the Autism Spectrum.

9. Ensure Disability Inclusion is Part of Your Entire Employment Life-cycle: Disability shouldn't just be an accommodation discussion. Disability should be included across the employment life-cycle, and whenever the organization reaches out to communicate with employees, disability inclusion should be top of mind.

10. Establish a Peer to Peer Mentoring Program: It is a common practice for new or junior employees to seek out mentors to help them with career navigation and professional development. Identify leaders who are willing to share disability status and become a mentor to new or existing employees with a disability.

11. Spotlight Your Disability ERG/BRG: Share the business benefits of your Disability ERG/BRG on your intranet or in your company newsletter. Discuss their goals and recent accomplishments and let everyone know how they are adding value.

12. Watch Drunk History: Yes, it's a thing. Comedy Central has “historians” share stories of historical events while having a few cocktails. Each episode is about eight minutes. It's a fun way to learn about events in history. Comedy Central did an episode on the [Section 504 legislation](#). This legislation paved the way for the Americans with Disabilities Act and features disability rights activist [Judy Heumann](#), who we interviewed for our blog last year. *Note: The episode has a lot of colorful language so it may be more appropriate for a homework assignment rather than a team event.*

13. Host an ADA30 Event: Host an event and **bring in a speaker** who is well versed in disability inclusion. Two notable speakers we love are our brand ambassadors - model [Shaholly Ayers](#) who has spent the last several years breaking barriers in NY Fashion Week. She has also been on the **Today Show** and featured in several global publications. Our second brand ambassador is actress, [Eileen Grubba](#) who you have likely seen in tv shows and movies like *New Amsterdam*, *Watchman*, *S.W.A.T* and more. You can [contact us](#) for more information and to talk about your event needs.

14. Review Your Sourcing Channels: Are your sourcing partners bringing you talent with disabilities? Analyze how many people with disabilities each partner has brought you. Find new partners if needed, and put in writing with all partners that you want a dedicated focus

on disability candidates. Even better - set a percentage of disability candidates to be brought forward from each partner.

15. Revamp On-boarding to include Disability Inclusion: Set the tone early that disability inclusion is part of your ongoing diversity efforts. Share stories and examples, and encourage open and candid conversations about disability status and inform new hires about the supports for employees with disabilities.

16. Create a Disability Events Calendar: Identify key events (ideally quarterly) where you recognize and educate employees about disability employment and inclusion. Just a few ideas: host hiring events, an ADA anniversary event, recognize October for disability employment awareness month, etc.

17. Create or Revitalize Disability Self-ID & Disclosure Campaigns: Self-Id & Disclosure campaigns are a great way to have disability inclusion conversations. Run a campaign to encourage employees to share disability status and be prepared to share how your company will support them.

18. Encourage Leaders to Lead in Disability Inclusion Efforts: It is important to have company leadership champion disability inclusion in your workplace. Identify leaders who are open to discussing disability status or serve as the voice of disability inclusion in the workplace.

19. Train for Better Disability Conversations: Let's admit it disability conversations can be awkward. Train all employees (not just managers) on how to have productive disability inclusion conversations especially when a co-worker decides to disclose disability status. Know what to say and what not to say.

20. Review Jobs/Positions for Flexible Work Arrangements: Most organizations have flexible work arrangements – telework, telecommute, flex time, part-time, job sharing, etc. Look for opportunities to be more creative with employees with disabilities and all staff. Remember what is good for people with disabilities is good for everyone.

21. Customer Service Training for those with Disabilities: Most businesses provide some type of product or services. People with disabilities have \$8Trillion in discretionary spending. So, does your customer service team know how to interact with people with varying disabilities? Do they know how to interact with someone who is blind, deaf, uses a wheelchair, or is on the Autism Spectrum? If the answer is no, get them trained.

22. Read a Disability Inclusion Book: We love "[Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist](#)" by Judy Heumann this is the powerful and compelling story of one of the most recognized disability inclusion leaders in the United States. Or "[Unleash Different](#)" by Rich Donovan, a book that clearly demonstrates the business benefits and imperatives of disability inclusion. Use this to engage teams and have a book club discussion.

23. Create a Wellness Room: Mothers' rooms are a common practice. But we are seeing this expand to "Wellness Rooms" – rooms where employees can take up to 30 minutes to address their wellness needs. These rooms create a space for employees to give themselves an insulin shot, or sit quietly when a migraine happens, or a place to check your mental health during a stressful day.

24. Engage A Disability Inclusion Blogger: Identify disability bloggers and have them guest blog for your company. Find an engaging voice matching the messages you want to convey to employees about disability inclusion. Many bloggers will do this for free or a nominal fee.

25. Ask About Accommodation Needs Before Every Team Meeting: When scheduling team meetings ask team members to connect prior to the meeting if they need an accommodation. Different meeting formats may prompt different needs, so don't assume because no one asked last time one is not needed. It also will help convey your intent to always be inclusive.

26. Create a Disability Inclusion Suggestion Box: Allow a place for anonymous disability suggestions. The box can be present at ERG meetings and members can offer suggestions to the company. ERG leadership can then review and bring the five most suggested items to HR and assist with an action plan to address any access or inclusion needs.

27. Volunteer with a Disability Organization: Find a disability organization that aligns with your team (perhaps a team member is a parent of a child with a disability and you want to support them) or your company has adopted an organization to support. Find ways to volunteer and engage.

28. Include Disability Inclusion Milestones in Performance Management: Add competencies for all employees to develop and be rated against related to disability employment and inclusion. Make disability inclusion a diversity goal for everyone.

29. Attend Your Company's Next ERG/BRG Meeting: Attend your company's next ERG/BRG meeting/event and see how you can get involved and support the needs of co-workers with disabilities.

30. Make a List of Accessible Restaurants, Hotels and Venues Near Your Office: Ensure there are no surprises when going out for team events. Providing a list of accessible venues near your locations will also be valuable for visiting customers, clients and recruits. This should also include accessible transportation.

We hope you find this list helpful and that you have made your short list of what you will do, not just for the anniversary of the ADA but also for moving your disability inclusion initiative forward. If you would like to discuss your ideas, reach out for a [free 30 minute consult](#).
#ADA30 #DisabilityInclusion #InclusionMeansEveryone