



**Your Policy, Training  
and Technical Resource**

## **MSCOD MYTH BUSTER**

### **MYTH: Disabilities are only physical impairments.**

FACT: While physical conditions such as blindness, deafness and mobility impairments are among the most noticeable disabilities, they are by no means representative of all disabilities. Many disabilities such as cognitive, mental health or psychiatric disabilities, are not readily noticeable to other people. Unseen disabilities are just as legitimate as visible disabilities.

### **MYTH: People with disabilities don't want to work.**

FACT: An International Labor Organization (ILO) study found that two-thirds of unemployed respondents with disabilities wanted to work but could not find jobs. The desire to work exists; the opportunity to do so is not always there.

### **MYTH: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) solved workplace discrimination against people with disabilities once and for all.**

FACT: Despite strides made under the ADA, people with disabilities still experience discrimination in the workplace, especially in the hiring process. The ADA removed some barriers to employment, but inconsistent enforcement of the law, lingering stereotypes about people with disabilities and inaccessible websites and digital application processes continue to present barriers to their employment.

### **MYTH: People with disabilities cannot perform the same jobs as people without disabilities.**

FACT: No person, with or without a disability, can perform every job. As is true for people without disabilities, people with disabilities have varied skills and experiences which make them perfect for certain jobs and unqualified for others. A person who is blind cannot be an airline pilot, but neither can many people without a vision disability. Focusing on what a person can do rather than what they cannot do opens up possibilities for many types of work.

### **MYTH: When hired, people with disabilities cannot perform their jobs as well as people without disabilities.**

FACT: Industry reports consistently rate workers with disabilities as average or above average in performance, quality and quantity of work, flexibility to demands, attendance and safety. People with disabilities, just as people without disabilities, are hired for jobs they are qualified to perform. The law does not require employers to hire unqualified people simply because they have a disability. When a person with a disability is employed, it is because they are capable of carrying out the functions of the job.

### **MYTH: Hiring people with disabilities places costly and inconvenient burdens on employers.**

FACT: Most workers with disabilities do not need any accommodations. When they do, a simple, low-cost solution usually brings a business within compliance of the ADA. In fact, 20% of accommodations cost nothing, and 50% of all changes require a one-time employer investment of less than \$500. Additionally, when factoring people with disabilities into the employee base, staff retention is increased by about 70%, saving millions of dollars yearly in recruitment and training costs.

**MYTH: The ADA forces businesses to make drastic changes to accommodate employees with disabilities.**

FACT: The ADA requires businesses to provide “reasonable accommodations” that are “readily achievable.” The ADA does not demand that employers renovate entire buildings nor change all their equipment. It asks only for common sense solutions that are commensurate with a business’s resources.

**MYTH: People with disabilities have more jobs today thanks to the ADA.**

FACT: While the volume of jobs has increased under the ADA, the percentage of people with disabilities who are employed has not risen with the same promise. Some measures claim that unemployment rates within the disability community are higher in 2015 than they were when the law was passed in 1990.

**MYTH: People with disabilities can apply for any job they choose, so there really is no problem.**

FACT: In the age of digital/electronic job applications, access to applications is often difficult for people who use assistive technology. Further, having access to applications is not the same as having work. Employers must recognize the skills and value that people with disabilities bring to a workplace and give them a fair chance at being interviewed and hired.

**MYTH: People with disabilities take jobs that could be filled by people without disabilities.**

FACT: People with disabilities present a solution, not a challenge, for the job market. A Georgetown University study estimates that the U.S. economy will face a shortage of 5 million workers by 2020. Rising wages for entry level workers already suggest a tightening labor market. With so many unfilled, available jobs, people with disabilities are untapped resources who add valuable human resource numbers to the anticipated workforce shortages.

**MYTH: Employment rates within the disability community are similar to the rates of the general population.**

FACT: According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 17.6 percent of people *with* disabilities were employed in 2013, compared with 64 percent of people *without* disabilities.

**MYTH: Many jobs are not suitable for people with disabilities.**

FACT: People with disabilities fill jobs of every description. Even the Presidency of the United States has been held by a person with a disability. A person’s ability, not disability, should determine whether a job is suitable for them.

**MYTH: People with disabilities need to be protected from failing.**

FACT: People with disabilities have a right to participate in the full range of human experiences including success and failure. Employers should have the same expectations of, and work requirements for all employees.

**MYTH: People with disabilities have problems getting to work.**

FACT: People with disabilities are capable of supplying their own transportation by choosing to walk, drive, utilize a car pool, public transportation or a cab. Their modes of transportation are as varied as those of other employees.

**MYTH: Employees with disabilities are not as productive as other employees.**

FACT: Industry reports consistently rate workers with disabilities as average or above average in performance, quality and quantity of work, flexibility to demands, attendance and safety.