



HOW TO HIRE A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY

Guide for employers

Greece

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to assist employers that intend to hire a person with disabilities, by providing essential information and thus answering a few frequently asked questions like: What are the cost implications? Are funding streams available? What kind of adjustments do I need to make? What support is available for me as an employer?

It can also serve as motivation to learn more about disability and the difficulties that persons with disabilities face and, maybe, join them in their fight for equality.



RELEVANT LEGISLATION

According to the Greek Law (N. 3454/2006, article 1, and paragraph 4β'), all companies in the private sector that employ over fifty (50) persons must hire persons with disabilities in a total of 2% of the number of the company's employees.

You can find the full text of the law here:

<https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/oikogeneia/n-3454-2006.html>



DISABILITY

Disability is a broad and complex phenomenon mainly because it doesn't refer just to a health problem. The Greek law (N.-4488/2017, article 60, and paragraph 1) defines persons with disabilities as *"persons with long-term physical, mental, or sensory difficulties which, in interaction with various obstacles, especially institutional, environmental or social behavior barriers, can prevent full and effective participation of these individuals in society on an equal footing with the others"*.

As the World Health Organization (<https://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en/>) also states: *"Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Thus disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives."*

Disability is conceptualized as being a multidimensional experience for the person involved. Three (3) dimensions are recognized: Body structure and function (and impairment thereof), Activity (and activity restrictions), Participation (and participation restrictions). Each person can experience their disability in a different way, even when one person has the same type of disability as another person. Moreover, some disabilities may be hidden and are known as invisible disability. It can be broken down to a variety of categories which include the following eight (8) main types of disability:

- Mobility/Physical
- Spinal Cord (SCI)
- Head Injuries (TBI)
- Vision
- Hearing
- Cognitive/Learning
- Psychological
- Invisible

You can find more information on the following link:

<https://www.disabled-world.com/disability/types/>

as part of the purpose of this guide is to give you just an idea of what disability is, make you curious to learn more and discover a few things that you hadn't considered before.



HIRING A PERSON WITH DISABILITIES

Why you should choose a person with disabilities

- By hiring a person with disabilities you assist in lowering the unemployment rate, raising their income and thus giving them more consuming power which, consequently, benefits the enterprises as it means a rise in productivity.
- A person with disabilities becomes more independent, helps his family financially and that relieves lots of the stress and the responsibilities the rest of the family feels and, as a result, the working members of the family are more productive in their work as well.
- There has been lots of research that the percentage of older people is rising and that results in the decrease of the country's labour force with subsequent economic disaster. Integrating people from minority groups, that until quite recently were ignored, is a must.
- A person with disability will be extremely loyal to you for having given them a chance and that can also inspire loyalty to the rest of your employees.
- You improve your company's image and act as an example that should be copied and followed.
- In that way, you also attract more people to come and work for you or make collaborations with you.
- Additionally, the public values you more and is keener to support you by buying your products or using your services. Not to mention your company's promotion on their personal profiles in social media.
- Above all, you promote equality firstly in the workplace and secondly in society, which is the ethical thing to do – it is not charity.

Is there any kind of support?

The manpower employment organization (OAED) offers programmes that can assist financially the employers who want to hire a person with disabilities. As this is not something “fixed”, you have to check OAED's website regularly in order to see when such programmes become available and are open for applications.

You can find the active programmes in the following link:

<http://www.oaed.gr/anoikta-programmata>

Issues to solve in the workplace

This section intends to give you a general idea of what difficulties the various categories of people with disabilities might face in the workplace, so that you can think on the adjustments that you will need to make before hiring one.

- Persons with motor disabilities can face natural, architectonical and technological obstacles that obscure their movement in any way. Moreover, they may face problems in using equipment that requires strength (of arms or legs) or fine motor skills (e.g. using the computer mouse or lifting the telephone's earpiece).

- Blind and persons with sight impairment mostly face difficulties in the section of getting information/communication when there is no provision for alternative ways of presenting the information in print (Braille system, digital form, really big fonts). Same thing happens with the use of various equipment or their navigation in the company's building when there are no signs into Braille.

- Deaf and hard of hearing face similar difficulties also in the field of communication/getting information when there is no provision for the conversion of sound into something visual. A few ways to combat this would be using the fax, text messages, emails etc. and translation in the sign language. They can also face difficulties into using equipment that doesn't have an optical notification or vibration (doorbell, alarm, landline phone).

- Persons with psychiatric disabilities and persons with mental disabilities usually cannot work in small places or in buildings without stairs and only elevators (possible claustrophobia), in companies that you welcome and serve crowds of people (possible agoraphobia) or in workplaces with lots of noise and stressful/intense work rhythm.

- Persons with perception difficulties are facing obstacles because of an environment that causes confusion, be it natural (not clear/complicated signs), architectonical (complicated layout of the workplace) and technological (equipment with complicated instructions of use).

- Persons with allergies mostly have difficulties in working environments that are not ventilated very well, have permanent carpets that don't get cleaned regularly, have animals inside or many plants.

- Persons with other disabilities are especially sensitive to infections and germs which require strict and regular cleaning of the workplace.

Making adjustments

As mentioned earlier, you can apply for a financial aid via OAED for the renovations that will be required when you employ a person with disabilities.

At this point though it is important to note that as the working time for the establishment of a pension right is extended and the likelihood of a person acquiring a disability increases, the creation of accessible workplaces is a prerequisite if you want your trusted employees to remain in the production process for more years.

Where do I look for employees?

The best option is to visit the Career Sign platform. It is designed especially for persons with disabilities and offers assistance in not only finding a suitable work position for them, but also personal/team counseling, help in writing a CV and preparation for an interview. You can access it from the link below:

<https://careersign.gr/eggrafes-etairies/>

A notable mention is the Career Day for Persons with Disabilities (<https://careerfair4all.com/>).

It started in 2016 by ethelon, a non-profit “civil society” organization that focuses on everything around volunteering, and takes place every year ever since in Athens, usually in spring (April-May), for one (1) day. Its goal is to mobilize and provide jobs to persons with disabilities while highlighting their unique characteristics. The companies that support this cause set up their booths and have the chance to meet and interview possible future employees. You can visit the website in order to find more about it and register your participation as a company.

Arrange interviews

You have received a great number of CVs in response to your call for applications and now it is time for the interviews. Even if it may prove difficult, it is better to speak with all the possible candidates and not disregard some because of their CV. Quite possibly lots of the people will have some particular skills even though they lack the typical qualifications and the only way to discover this is by calling them in for an interview.

Hire that person-a few tips to keep in mind

If you decided to hire a person with disabilities via a programme by OAED, keep in mind that, usually, you have to keep that person employed for at least forty-eight (48) months and that for the first thirty-six (36) months you will receive 25 euros per day (1.5 euros more if it is a woman) for full-time employment. If it part-time employment, then the daily amount is 15 euros (1.5 euros more if it is a woman).

Furthermore, the first three (3) months are considered preparatory. You have to train your new employee in his post of work and secure their smooth integration in the workplace. For this reason you will receive a financial aid of 300 euros.

As mentioned earlier, OAED gives the opportunity for a financial aid regarding the renovation of the workplace so that it can be disability-friendly. Even if no such programme exists at the time of your employing a person with disabilities, keep in mind that you will have to make some adjustments (if they are not already done).

Usually, OAED covers up to 90% of the total cost of the renovations and up to the amount of 2,500 euros for every one of them that is deemed necessary.

Finally, a nice suggestion would be to also train your staff regarding disabilities before the arrival of the new employees. That way you will manage to create and secure a supportive working environment.

Additional resources

Εθνική Συνομοσπονδία ατόμων με αναπηρία:

<https://www.esamea.gr/index.php>

Πανελλήνια Ομοσπονδία Σωματείων Γονέων και Κηδεμόνων Ατόμων με Αναπηρία:

<http://www.posgamea.gr/>

Πανελλήνιο Σωματείο Γονέων Κηδεμόνων και Φίλων Ατόμων με Αναπηρίες «Ο Ερμής»:

<https://somatioermis.gr/>

Hellenic Federation of the Deaf:

<https://www.omke.gr/>

Εθνική Ομοσπονδία Κινητικά Αναπήρων:

<http://eoka.com.gr/index.php>

Εθνική Ομοσπονδία Τυφλών:

<http://www.eoty.gr/main/index.asp>

Πανελλήνια Ομοσπονδία Συλλόγων Οργανώσεων για την Ψυχική Υγεία (ΠΟΣΟΨΥ):

<https://www.posopsi.gr/>



Epralima - Escola Profissional do Alto Lima, C.I.P.R.L.



CESUR - Centro Superior de Formação Europa Sur



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