Here are some programs that work with people with disabilities in the CNMI! *(This is not all inclusive)*
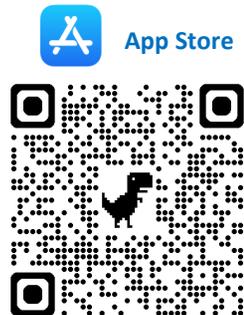

Live Transcribe Apps

Google Play

App Store

Key Takeaway

An inclusive workplace isn't just about compliance—it's about respect, equity, and making sure every team member can contribute to protecting and supporting our community.

Disability Awareness in the Workplace
Quick Reference Guide

1. Understanding Disability

- A disability is a physical, sensory, cognitive, mental health, or chronic health condition that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
- Not Always Visible: Many disabilities are invisible (e.g., diabetes, PTSD, hearing loss). Don't assume someone doesn't have a disability just because you can't see it.
- Social vs. Medical Model: Medical Model focuses on diagnosis/impairment. Social Model focuses on barriers in the environment (physical, attitudinal, systemic).
- Inclusion comes from removing barriers, not 'fixing' people.

2. Disability Etiquette

- People First: Say 'person with a disability' rather than 'disabled person' (unless someone tells you their preference).
- Respect Autonomy: Speak directly to the person, not their interpreter or companion.
- Ask Before Assisting: Never assume someone needs help; ask first.
- Inclusive Communication: Use plain language, provide written information, and be mindful of captions/alt text in digital content.
- Respect Devices: Mobility aids, service animals, or assistive technology are part of personal space. Don't touch or use them without permission.

3. Legal Protections

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Prohibits discrimination and requires reasonable accommodations in employment.
- Rehabilitation Act (Section 504/508): Ensures accessibility in federally funded programs and technology.
- Reasonable Accommodation: Modifications that allow an employee to perform essential job duties (e.g., flexible schedule, adaptive software, accessible workstation).
- more than words.

"The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't said."

Peter Drucker

4. Disability in the Field

- Accessibility in Fieldwork: Ensure meeting sites, monitoring stations, and public venues are physically accessible.
- Communication: Provide materials in multiple formats (digital, large print, plain language).
- Emergency Planning: Factor in evacuation needs for people with mobility, sensory, or cognitive disabilities.
- Community Engagement: Involve people with disabilities in environmental decision-making and outreach.

5. Common Myths vs. Facts

- Myth: People with disabilities can't perform complex jobs. Fact: With accommodations, people with disabilities are equally capable and often bring unique problem-solving skills.
- Myth: Accommodations are expensive. Fact: Most accommodations cost little or nothing.
- Myth: Talking about disability is offensive. Fact: Respectful, direct conversation is better than avoiding the topic.

6. Practical Tips for Staff

- When organizing meetings or training: always check accessibility of location and materials.
- In emails and documents: use accessible fonts, headings, and provide alternative text for images.
- During community outreach: use microphones, provide captions, and avoid jargon-heavy presentations.
- In fieldwork teams: plan tasks so everyone can contribute, adjusting physical demands as needed.
- Model inclusion: your attitude sets the tone for workplace culture.

7. Resources

- Job Accommodation Network (JAN): askjan.org\ADA National Network: adata.org
- Disability Rights CNMI (if applicable): local advocacy and support
- U.S. EEOC: eeoc.gov

DO	DON'T
Do speak slowly, use short sentences, repeat, reassure, give extra time to process, be patient, and do use person first language. *("person with a disability")*	Don't rush, overload with info, use slang, argue, touch personal property *(wheelchair),* talk of personal disability related information in public or make assumptions.

Communication Tools for the Workplace

Personal communication apps that help employees with different disabilities communicate more effectively with coworkers. The apps are grouped by disability type to support inclusion in day-to-day workplace interactions.

Category	App	Function	Cost
Deaf or HH	AVA	Real-time speech-to-text captions	Subscription based
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	Google Live Transcribe	App that transcribes speech instantly to text	Free
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	Otter.ai	Records meetings and searchable transcripts	Free/basic, paid tiers
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	RogerVoice	Converts phone calls into real-time text	Free basic, paid tiers
Blind or Low Vision	Microsoft Seeing AI	Describes text, objects, & people - phone cam.	Free
Blind or Low Vision	VoiceOver (iOS) / TalkBack (Android)	Built-in screen readers for mobile devices	Free (built-in)
Blind or Low Vision	Be My Eyes	Connects users with volunteers for visual assistance	Free
Limited Vocabulary or ESL	Proloquo2Go	Symbol-based AAC app for communication	Paid
Limited Vocabulary or ESL	TD Snap	Symbol-based communication	Paid
Limited Vocabulary or ESL	Speech Assistant AAC	Customizable text to speech app	Affordable (paid)
Limited Vocabulary or ESL	Google Look to Speak (Beta test)	Uses eye movements to select phrases	Free
General Accessibility	WhatsApp Voice Notes	Allows sending voice recordings	Free
General Accessibility	Microsoft Teams Immersive Reader	Reads text aloud, breaks down sentences, adjusts formatting	Included in Teams
General Accessibility	Grammarly Keyboard	Supports clear writing for people with language challenges	Free/basic & paid

Recommendation: Use a combination of mainstream apps with accessibility features and specialized apps that fit their needs. This ensures smoother day-to-day communication between coworkers of all abilities.