



American
Heart
Association®

WORKPLACE SUPPORT

for People with Disabilities:

Strategies for Survivors of Stroke and Other Conditions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



People with disabilities face significantly higher rates of unemployment and underemployment, with many being limited to part-time or self-employment roles due to workplace challenges.¹ However, companies that prioritize disability inclusion report higher revenues, productivity and employee engagement.²

Workers with disabilities often bring loyalty, reliability, strong work ethic and unique perspective to their roles that businesses are increasingly recognizing. Workplaces supporting individuals with disabilities not only fulfill legal and ethical responsibilities but also enhance organizational performance and culture.

Stroke is a leading cause of long-term disability, and its incidence is rising among younger adults. Despite the desire to return to work, fewer than half of survivors of stroke succeed, often due to physical, cognitive and systemic barriers.³ More than 795,000 people in the U.S. have a stroke each year, including new and recurrent cases with approximately 160,000 deaths.⁴

A welcoming workplace requires eliminating challenges of all types. Stigma associated with disabilities is a powerful yet invisible roadblock. Measures such as providing flexible work schedules, paid leave, a physically accessible workspace, assistive technologies and robust benefit design that provides access to appropriate rehabilitative services that help employees better perform their jobs can promote inclusiveness.

This American Heart Association CEO Roundtable brief explores strategies and resources to help company leaders as they develop policies and practices that use every employee's talents and strengths. This, in turn, can create a rewarding work experience for all.



Read the full brief on
ceoroundtable.heart.org

1 Office of Disability Employment Policy. (n.d.). *Disability employment statistics*. U.S. Department of Labor. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/research-evaluation/statistics>

2 Accenture. (2023). *Companies that lead in disability inclusion outperform peers financially, reveals new research from Accenture*. <https://newsroom.accenture.com/news/2023/companies-that-lead-in-disability-inclusion-outperform-peers-financially-reveals-new-research-from-accenture>

3 Radford, K. A. et al. (2025). Effectiveness of early vocational rehabilitation versus usual care to support RETurn to work after stroKE: A pragmatic, parallel-arm multicenter, randomized controlled trial. *International Journal of Stroke*, 20(4), 471-485. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17474930241306693>

4 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025). *Stroke facts*. <https://www.cdc.gov/disability-and-health/about/index.html>

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