



SSB Business Accessibility Guide

Making Your Workplace Inclusive,
Productive, and Vision-Accessible



Why Accessibility Matters in Today's Workforce

- Vision loss is already in most workplaces. In Minnesota, 89,300 people identify with a visual disability, and nationwide, uncorrectable vision loss is expected to double by 2050; 4 in 10 adults (about 93 million) are at high risk.
- People with vision loss face an unemployment rate around 10%, compared to 4% for those without vision loss (illustrating untapped talent).
- Inclusive companies outperform peers and realize real ROI; accommodations typically cost \$0–\$300, whereas replacing an employee can cost 50–200% of salary.

Rapid Response Retention Services (Accessibility “First-Aid”)

When vision changes begin to affect performance, SSB provides fast, practical support with free, no obligation consultations.

Services include:

- On-site or virtual consultations to troubleshoot barriers and solutions.
- Job-site accessibility analysis with quick, realistic accommodation options.
- Assistive technology setup and training for supervisors and employees.
- Team education on vision loss and accessible work practices.
- ADA and reasonable accommodation resources tailored to your workplace.

Rapid Response Hotline: 651-259-7162
(For both individuals and businesses)

Or Online, scan QR code here:



Assistive Technology (AT) Support

SSB's Assistive & Adaptive Technology Unit guides selection, setup, and training on:

- Screen readers, screen magnification software, OCR/text-to-speech tools.
- Braille displays, portable note takers, electronic magnifiers, scanners.

Why it pays: Most accommodations are low or no cost; typical costs are \$0–\$300, versus 50–200% of salary to replace an employee.

Physical Environment Accessibility

SSB helps you optimize the environment of your business so employees with low vision can work safely and efficiently:

- Practical low-cost strategies (lighting, glare reduction, high-contrast labeling, clear pathways, workstation layout).
- On-site guidance to implement changes quickly with your facilities/HR team.
- Digital Accessibility & IT Support
- Improve accessibility of your websites, software, and internal systems:
- No-cost website/IT accessibility consultation: quick assessment and recommendations, with no obligation to utilize.
- Support evaluating accessibility of internal/external sites, hardware, and software and planning improvements aligned to current standards.

Why it matters: Employees rely on accessible digital tools for onboarding, training, HR tasks, and everyday work. Additionally, people with disabilities represent a significant portion of the population. Making your public facing websites and resources accessible widens your customer base and opens new avenues for revenue and marketing.

Accessible Materials: Braille, Audio & E-Text

Ensure equal access to critical information:

- Braille transcription (fee-for-service) for handbooks, training content, safety protocols, signage, and customer-facing materials.
- Audio & Large Print/E-Text conversion (DAISY audio, MP3, accessible Word/PDF, structured e-text) for policies, training modules, benefits packets, orientation materials, internal comms.

The State Service for the Blind Communication Center is Minnesota's Accessible Reading Source, loaning digital audio players and supporting print-disabled access statewide. Related services include MARS (free audio books/magazines for eligible readers) and Radio Talking Book (24/7 newspapers, magazines, books via stream/app/Alexa).

Training for an Accessible Workplace

Free, customized training (in-person or virtual) to build accessibility confidence:

- Disability & inclusion awareness for HR, supervisors, and teams.
- Working effectively with blind/low-vision employees and AT demonstrations.
- Accessible onboarding and ADA/accommodation resources.

Financial Supports & Incentives for Accessibility

- Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund (ERAF): reimbursement for many workplace accommodation expenses (assistive tech, captioning/interpreting, specialized software, ergonomic equipment, signage, etc.).
- Free technical assistance and consultations!

Contact: Eraf.deed@state.mn.us

651-539-2390 | 1-833-391-8050

- WOTC and other incentives: eligibility for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and disability-related deductions/credits.

Accessibility FAQs

Will accessibility be expensive? Most accommodations cost \$0–\$300 (many are free), and ERAF reimburses qualified expenses; replacing staff costs 50–200% of salary.

Can someone with vision loss perform the job?

Yes. With AT and reasonable accommodations, performance matches or exceeds peers; the method may differ, but outcomes are the same.

Will this effect workers' compensation rates? No.

Premiums are based on job classification, not disability status.

How should we interview candidates with vision loss?

As with any qualified candidate, focus on skills. SSB can provide inclusive interview tips and resources.

How to Get Connected

1. Contact SSB

For urgent retention/accessibility help: 651-259-7162 (Retention Hotline) or the [online hotline form](#).

General inquiries & service connection: 651-539-2300 or the [online contact form](#).

Step 2: Discuss Your Needs

SSB gathers details on tasks, barriers, job requirements, and goals.

Step 3: Begin Services!

Onsite or virtual consultations as needed, tailored accommodations and technology recommendations, training, follow-up to ensure that your needs are met.



SSB Accessibility Contact Directory

Evolve Employment & Retention Hotline

Rapid help for urgent retention needs and employees experiencing vision changes

Phone: 651-259-7162

Contact Online: Scan QR code



SSB Main Office (locations statewide)

General inquiries about all that SSB offers.

Phone: 651-539-2300 | Toll-Free: 800-652-9000

Email: ssb.info@state.mn.us

Braille Services

Convert printed material to braille for businesses across MN upon request.

Phone: 651-539-2315 | 1-800-722-0550

Email: ssb.braille@state.mn.us

Audio & E-Text/Large Print Services

Convert printed material to audio, large print, and e-text that is easily read by screen readers.

Phone: 651-539-1422 | 1-800-722-0550

Info Line: 651-539-1422

Hiring & Workforce Development

Contact an Employment Specialist

Phone: 651-539-2300 (ask for the employment team)

Email: MN_DEEDEmploymentServicesTeam@state.mn.us

Web Accessibility Services

David Andrews, Technology Specialist

Phone: 651-539-2294

Email: David.B.Andrews@state.mn.us



ERAF (Reimbursements & Technical Assistance)

Phone: 651-539-2390 or 1-833-391-8050

Email: Eraf.deed@state.mn.us

External Resources

- MN IT Office of Accessibility: <https://mn.gov/mnit/about-mnit/accessibility/>
- American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) Accessibility Resources: <https://afb.org/digital-inclusion/accessibility-resources>
- MN System of Technology to Achieve Results (STAR) Program: <https://mn.gov/admin/star/>
- Accessibility Toolkit from the Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN) on Disability: <https://askearn.org/page/accommodation-and-accessibility-toolkit>
- Accessibility Resources from the Job Accommodation Network (JAN): <https://askjan.org/topics/accessi.cfm>