

Leadership pathway or sponsorship plan for staff with disabilities

You shape how people move into lead and leadership roles and want the pathway to work for staff with disabilities without asking anyone to disclose.

Outcome: By the end, you will have a leadership pathway or sponsorship plan: a transparent pathway map, leadership criteria tested for job-relatedness, sponsors with decision power, an owner for accommodations across every transition, cohort events that are accessible every time, program-level measures with suppression, and a review date. No one is identified as disabled anywhere in it.

Situations that may fit this path

- A lead, supervisor, or leadership cohort pathway being designed or reviewed
- Leadership criteria that live in people's heads
- A sponsorship effort for people who are rarely put forward

Six steps to work through in order

1. **Test the pathway, not the person** — Use Ask to work through the criteria, the transitions, sponsorship, and how the division would see the pattern in its data. Answers will say what needs leadership, HR, or the Equity Director. · **Ask a question** — program page [/ask?path=gp-11](#)
2. **Consider community context** (If relevant) — If the pathway also aims to reach staff from particular Minnesota communities, read the relevant brief for what not to assume. · **Explore Minnesota Communities** — program page [/minnesota-communities](#)
3. **Choose practical resources** — Use the accessible leadership pathways note, the leadership criteria check, the accommodations-across-transitions aid, and the sponsorship note. · **Accessible leadership pathways and sponsorship** — program page [/resources/pn-accessible-leadership-pathways](#) · **Leadership criteria: are they job related?** — program page [/resources/ja-leadership-criteria-job-relatedness](#) · **Accommodations across transitions** — program page [/resources/ja-accommodation-across-transitions](#) · **Mentoring, sponsorship, and reverse mentoring** — program page [/resources/pn-mentoring-sponsorship](#)
4. **Draft your pathway or sponsorship plan** — Complete the plan. Do not name anyone or record who is disabled. Use the downloaded checklist to write your answers in a tool you normally use. This page does not save them.
5. **Review your work** — Confirm the pathway map is written, each criterion is tied to leadership work, accommodations have an owner at every transition, cohort events are accessible every time, sponsors hold decision power, measures use aggregates with suppression, and no individual is identified.
6. **Take it to the right people** — Bring the plan to division leadership and your Equity Director. Individual accommodation matters go through the confidential process with HR. DSD staff can also request a

consultation. · **Find the right person** — program page /support/right-person?matter=advancement_or_leadership_pathway

What a useful result looks like

Still needs work

- A mentoring program with no sponsorship
- A cohort that is accessible on request
- A plan that lists who is disabled

Ready to use

- The pathway map is written and public
- Criteria are tied to leadership work
- Accommodations have an owner across every transition and sponsors hold decision power

Privacy

Never record who is disabled or any accommodation history. Describe the pathway, not people. This page does not save your answers or progress. Notes saved through an earlier version may still be in this browser's site data; this page does not show or delete them.

Leadership pathway or sponsorship plan

Privacy

This is a blank published checklist. If you complete a downloaded copy, store and share that file according to DHS requirements. Nothing you write in that file is saved back to this page.

Item	Detail
Pathway, cohort, or sponsorship effort and its owner (required)	The pathway, not a person.
What the lead or leadership role requires, which experiences count, and how to get them (required)	Write the pathway map so advancement does not depend on informal networks.
Leadership criteria and the leadership work each one predicts (required)	One line per criterion, including unwritten ones. Replace proxies such as executive presence or always-on availability with observable leadership behaviors.
Transitions and the responsible role or office at each (required)	Nomination, interview, acting assignment, cohort, new team, return from leave. Identify the responsible role or office at each; keep individual accommodation details in the confidential process.

Item	Detail
Accessible every time (required)	Materials in advance, captioning, flexible participation formats, no timed or drag-based activities, accommodation offered to everyone in the same sentence as logistics.
Sponsorship with decision power (required)	How sponsors are matched with people who want them, what sponsors commit to, and how you will know whether sponsorship leads to assignments, using aggregates only.
How you heard from disabled staff without forcing disclosure (required)	Aggregate listening, employee resource groups, trusted intermediaries, and how you will report back.
Reviewing roles or offices and their authority (required)	Identify the reviewing roles or offices, such as division leadership, HR, the Equity Director, or an employee resource group. Keep individual names out of these notes.
What you chose not to assume (required)	About who is disabled, what accommodation someone needs, or what readiness looks like.
Role or office responsible for each follow-up (required)	Use roles or offices, without names or personal accommodation details.
Review and report-back date (required)	When you will look at aggregate patterns and tell staff what changed.

Review your notes against

- Every follow-up has a responsible role or office
- A next review date is set
- This is connected to your specific work
- Language, disability, and communication access were considered for this work
- You identified the reviewing roles or offices and their authority
- You noted what you chose not to assume
- No names of candidates, employees, or complainants are included

Questions to bring to Ask

- We are redesigning our lead-worker pathway. How do we make it work for staff with disabilities without asking anyone to disclose?
- Which of our leadership criteria are proxies, and what would replace them?
- How do we make sure accommodations carry across a rotation or a cohort?