**Disability:IN Global Directory**

**Iceland**

**Disability Definition**

In Iceland, the legal framework defines disability primarily through the Act on Services for Disabled People with Long-Term Support Needs, [No. 38/2018](https://www.althingi.is/lagas/nuna/2018038.html). This legislation aims to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to necessary services and support to facilitate their participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Additionally, the Act on the Affairs of Disabled People, [No. 59/1992](https://www.government.is/media/velferdarraduneyti-media/media/acrobat-enskar_sidur/Act-on-the-Affairs-of-Disabled-People-No-59-1992-with-subsequent-amendments.pdf), specifies that individuals are entitled to services if they have mental or physical disabilities requiring special services and support. This includes conditions such as mental retardation, psychiatric illness, physical disability, blindness, and deafness, as well as disabilities resulting from chronic illnesses or accidents.

Iceland has also ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([CRPD](https://www.humanrights.is/en/human-rights-education-project/human-rights-concepts-ideas-and-fora/the-human-rights-protection-of-vulnerable-groups/disabled-persons)), reinforcing its commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.

**Legislation**

In Iceland, the legal framework for disability rights and services is primarily guided by the Act on Services for Disabled People with Long-Term Support Needs, [No. 38/2018](https://www.althingi.is/lagas/nuna/2018038.html). This act focuses on ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive necessary services to participate fully in society, promoting equality, accessibility, and inclusion. It underscores the provision of support tailored to the specific needs of individuals, fostering their independence and quality of life. The act came into effect on October 1, 2018, replacing the Act on the Affairs of Disabled People, [No. 59/1992](https://www.government.is/media/velferdarraduneyti-media/media/acrobat-enskar_sidur/Act-on-the-Affairs-of-Disabled-People-No-59-1992-with-subsequent-amendments.pdf), to reflect a more modern approach to disability services.

The earlier Act on the Affairs of Disabled People, [No. 59/1992](https://www.government.is/media/velferdarraduneyti-media/media/acrobat-enskar_sidur/Act-on-the-Affairs-of-Disabled-People-No-59-1992-with-subsequent-amendments.pdf), outlined initial provisions for disability services, focusing on rights to assistance and support for those with mental or physical disabilities. This act laid the foundation for disability policy in Iceland but was eventually replaced to better align with contemporary human rights standards.

Additionally, Iceland has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([CRPD](https://www.humanrights.is/en/human-rights-education-project/human-rights-concepts-ideas-and-fora/the-human-rights-protection-of-vulnerable-groups/disabled-persons)), further solidifying its commitment to upholding the dignity and rights of individuals with disabilities. This ratification aligns Iceland’s disability policy with international standards, ensuring comprehensive protection and inclusion for persons with disabilities across all aspects of life.

**Employer Requirements**

In Iceland, employers are legally obligated to uphold the rights of individuals with disabilities, ensuring equal treatment and non-discrimination in the workplace. This commitment is enshrined in the Act on Services for Disabled People with Long-Term Support Needs, [No. 38/2018](https://reykjavik.is/en/human-rights-policy/disability), which emphasizes the provision of necessary services and support to facilitate the full participation of disabled individuals in society. The act underscores the importance of accessibility and reasonable accommodation within employment settings to promote equality and inclusion.

Additionally, Iceland has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([CRPD](https://www.humanrights.is/en/human-rights-education-project/human-rights-concepts-ideas-and-fora/the-human-rights-protection-of-vulnerable-groups/disabled-persons)), reinforcing its dedication to upholding the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Article 27 of the CRPD specifically addresses work and employment, obligating signatory states to recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others. This includes prohibiting discrimination concerning all matters related to employment and ensuring that reasonable accommodation is provided in the workplace.

It is important to note that, as of the latest available information, [Iceland](https://iuslaboris.com/insights/quotas-for-employing-people-with-disabilities-in-thirteen-countries/) does not enforce specific hiring quotas for individuals with disabilities in either the public or private sectors. Instead, the focus is on creating an inclusive labor market through anti-discrimination laws and policies that promote equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of disability. Employers are encouraged to implement affirmative action programs and other measures to support the employment of persons with disabilities, aligning with the principles outlined in international frameworks such as the CRPD.

Employers must also comply with general labor laws that protect [workers' rights](https://work.iceland.is/working/workers-rights/), including those of individuals with disabilities. This encompasses adhering to collective agreements that stipulate minimum employment standards, ensuring safe and healthy working conditions, and respecting the rights of all employees. By fostering an inclusive and accommodating work environment, employers contribute to the broader societal goal of equal participation for individuals with disabilities in the workforce.

**Accessibility Requirements**

In Iceland, accessibility for individuals with disabilities is governed by the [Planning and Building Act No. 160/2010](https://www.althingi.is/lagas/nuna/2010160.html), which mandates that all new constructions and significant renovations ensure access for people with disabilities. This legislation emphasizes the importance of designing buildings and public spaces that are usable by everyone, regardless of physical ability. The act stipulates that architectural plans must incorporate features such as ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms to accommodate individuals with mobility challenges.

In addition to national legislation, Iceland has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([CRPD](https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html)), reinforcing its commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. The CRPD obligates signatory states to promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities, including accessibility to the physical environment, transportation, information, and communications.

Despite these legislative frameworks, challenges remain, particularly concerning older buildings and natural attractions that may not yet be fully accessible. To address these issues, [initiatives](https://visitreykjavik.is/access-disabled) such as the Ramping Up Iceland campaign have been launched to improve accessibility across the country. This project aims to construct ramps and other necessary modifications to existing structures, enhancing mobility for individuals with disabilities.

Furthermore, [organizations](https://www.sjalfsbjorg.is) like Sjálfsbjörg, the National Association of People with Disabilities in Iceland, play a crucial role in advocating for improved accessibility and providing resources for travelers with disabilities. Their efforts include conducting surveys on public places and making recommendations for enhancements to ensure inclusivity.

**Cultural Norms**

In Iceland, cultural norms surrounding disability emphasize equality, inclusion, and social integration. The nation upholds a strong social welfare system that prioritizes the needs of individuals with disabilities, reflecting a societal commitment to care for all citizens. This approach fosters a positive perception of disability, with a focus on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for participation in all aspects of life.

Reference: <https://www.expatfocus.com/iceland/guide/iceland-disability>?

Historically, Iceland's understanding of disability has evolved significantly. Prior to the 20th century, physical, mental, and sensory differences were interpreted through various cultural lenses, often influenced by prevailing societal attitudes and limited medical knowledge. Research into medieval Icelandic society indicates that while certain impairments were acknowledged, the absence of a formal concept of disability led to diverse and sometimes ambiguous perceptions.

Reference: <https://sjdr.se/articles/10.16993/sjdr.868>?

In contemporary Iceland, there is a high level of awareness and understanding of disabilities. The country has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([CRPD](https://www.humanrights.is/en/human-rights-education-project/human-rights-concepts-ideas-and-fora/the-human-rights-protection-of-vulnerable-groups/disabled-persons?)), reinforcing its dedication to upholding the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. This commitment is evident in the legal framework and policies designed to promote accessibility and participation. However, challenges persist, particularly regarding accessibility in certain public spaces and transportation systems. Older buildings and infrastructure may not fully accommodate individuals with disabilities, highlighting the need for ongoing improvements to achieve comprehensive inclusivity.

Reference: <https://www.expatfocus.com/iceland/guide/iceland-disability>?

[Advocacy groups](https://www.obi.is/static/files/skjol/pdf-skyrslur/disability-and-welfare-in-iceland_so-skyrsla.pdf?) play a crucial role in Icelandic society, striving to enhance the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities. Organizations such as the Icelandic Federation of Organizations of Disabled People (Öryrkjabandalag Íslands) work diligently to promote accessibility, provide support, and raise public awareness. Their efforts contribute significantly to the progressive cultural norms that prioritize the well-being and integration of individuals with disabilities in Iceland.

**Insights**

In Iceland, the prevalence of disability increases with age, with many impairments first appearing in adulthood or old age. According to experimental [statistics](https://statice.is/publications/news-archive/social-affairs/exerimental-statistics-disabled-people-in-iceland/?) published by Statistics Iceland in July 2024, the form of residence for disabled individuals differs notably from that of non-disabled individuals. Due to the varying age distribution, a higher proportion of disabled individuals reside in nursing homes compared to those living independently in standard housing. Additionally, disabled individuals are more likely to live in rented accommodations than others.

Labor market participation among disabled individuals presents distinct patterns. [Data](https://statice.is/publications/news-archive/labour-market/the-disabled-on-the-icelandic-labor-market/?) from 2017 indicates that approximately 8.1% of Icelanders aged 16 to 66 received disability pensions, equating to nearly 17,900 persons. Of these, around 69.4% were inactive in the labor market, 28.5% were employed, and about 2.1% were unemployed. Notably, among those employed, 62.4% worked part-time, while 37.6% held full-time positions.

These insights highlight the unique challenges faced by disabled individuals in Iceland, particularly concerning housing and employment. The data underscores the importance of targeted policies and support systems to enhance accessibility, promote inclusive housing solutions, and improve labor market participation for disabled persons. Ongoing efforts are essential to address these challenges and ensure equal opportunities for all citizens.

# Supplier Diversity

In Iceland, the concept of supplier diversity is gradually gaining recognition, though it is not yet as established as in some other countries. Supplier diversity involves integrating businesses owned by individuals from underrepresented groups—such as women, minorities, and persons with disabilities—into a company's supply chain. This practice promotes inclusivity, drives innovation, and contributes to economic equity.

While Iceland does not have formalized national policies mandating supplier diversity, there is a growing awareness and interest in adopting inclusive procurement practices. Organizations like [Inclusive Iceland](https://inclusiveiceland.is/?) are at the forefront of this movement, offering consulting services to schools, communities, and businesses to advance equity through holistic and intersectional strategies. Their approach emphasizes customized solutions tailored to the unique needs of each organization, fostering environments where diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are integral to operations.

Additionally, multinational companies operating in Iceland may implement their global supplier diversity programs locally, thereby introducing best practices and setting examples for inclusive procurement. For instance, firms like [Accenture](https://www.accenture.com/us-en/about/company/accenture-supplier-inclusion-sustainability?) have comprehensive Supplier Inclusion & Sustainability Programs that span multiple countries, promoting diversity within their supply chains by engaging with small and diverse suppliers. These programs aim to create value by fostering innovation, enhancing brand reputation, and contributing to community development.

The increasing interest in supplier diversity reflects a broader commitment to social responsibility and sustainable business practices in Iceland. By embracing diverse suppliers, Icelandic businesses can access a wider range of perspectives and solutions, enhancing competitiveness and contributing to the overall health of the economy. As awareness grows, it is anticipated that more organizations will adopt formal supplier diversity initiatives, further embedding inclusivity into the fabric of Iceland's business landscape.

# Talent Sourcing Resources

In Iceland, several resources and programs are dedicated to supporting the employment of individuals with disabilities, facilitating their integration into the workforce. The [Directorate of Labour](https://vinnumalastofnun.is/en?) offers a specialized service known as Employment with Support (Atvinna með Stuðningi - AMS). This program assists individuals with limited work capacity in finding suitable employment within the general job market and provides ongoing support to ensure job retention and success. Applications for this service can be submitted through the Directorate's website.

For those requiring more intensive assistance, municipalities offer sheltered employment, job training, and activity programs tailored to individual needs. These programs are designed to provide paid job training, prepare individuals for employment in the general labor market, or offer permanent positions within supportive environments. For instance, the City of [Reykjavík](https://reykjavik.is/en/employment-and-activities-for-people-with-disabilities?) provides information on employment and activities for people with disabilities, emphasizing the importance of work in enhancing self-image and well-being.

Additionally, organizations like [Specialisterne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Specialisterne?) operate in Iceland, focusing on harnessing the talents of individuals on the autism spectrum and those with similar neurodivergent profiles. Specialisterne provides training programs to develop personal, social, and professional skills, facilitating employment in sectors such as IT and technology. Their approach includes using tools like LEGO Mindstorms to identify strengths and motivations, tailoring support to each individual's needs.

**Additional Resources**

In Iceland, several organizations are dedicated to advocating for the rights and well-being of individuals with disabilities, providing essential resources and support.

The [Disability Rights Protection Office of Iceland](https://island.is/en/o/disability-rights-protection?) serves as a key advocate, ensuring that the legal and human rights of people with disabilities are recognized and upheld. Their services include rights advocacy in individual cases and assistance in securing personal spokespersons.

The Icelandic Disability Alliance ([ÖBÍ](https://www.obi.is/about-obi/?)) is an umbrella organization comprising 43 member associations representing various disability groups and individuals with chronic illnesses. Established in 1961, ÖBÍ focuses on fighting for the rights of people with disabilities, advocating for their inclusion and equal opportunities in society.

For mental health support, the Icelandic Mental Health Alliance ([Geðhjálp](https://gedhjalp.is/english/?)) offers services to individuals with mental disorders and disabilities. With a membership base of users, family members, professionals, and advocates, Geðhjálp works towards improving services, defending rights, and preventing prejudice through advocacy, consultation, and dissemination of information.

The [Icelandic Association of the Deaf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deafness_in_Iceland?) is the leading organization for deaf individuals in Iceland, focusing on protecting and promoting the rights and quality of life for the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community. Established in 1960, it has been instrumental in advocating for the recognition and use of Icelandic Sign Language.