



Accessible Business Travel

How employers can support
employees with disabilities
before, during, and after work travel

Intro

Business travel is often viewed as a routine part of work. For employees with disabilities, however, a trip can involve dozens of accessibility considerations that begin long before the trip begins and continue well after arrival.

Leading employers on [Disability:IN's Reasonable Accommodation Committee](#) shared how their organizations are addressing travel accommodations and where significant gaps still exist. Their discussion revealed a common theme: for all employees, the experience of traveling for work should include end-to-end support that enables employees to travel confidently, safely, and productively.

This guide shares proven approaches to embedding accessibility into travel policies, booking systems, event planning processes, and employee support services.

[**Get Started →**](#)

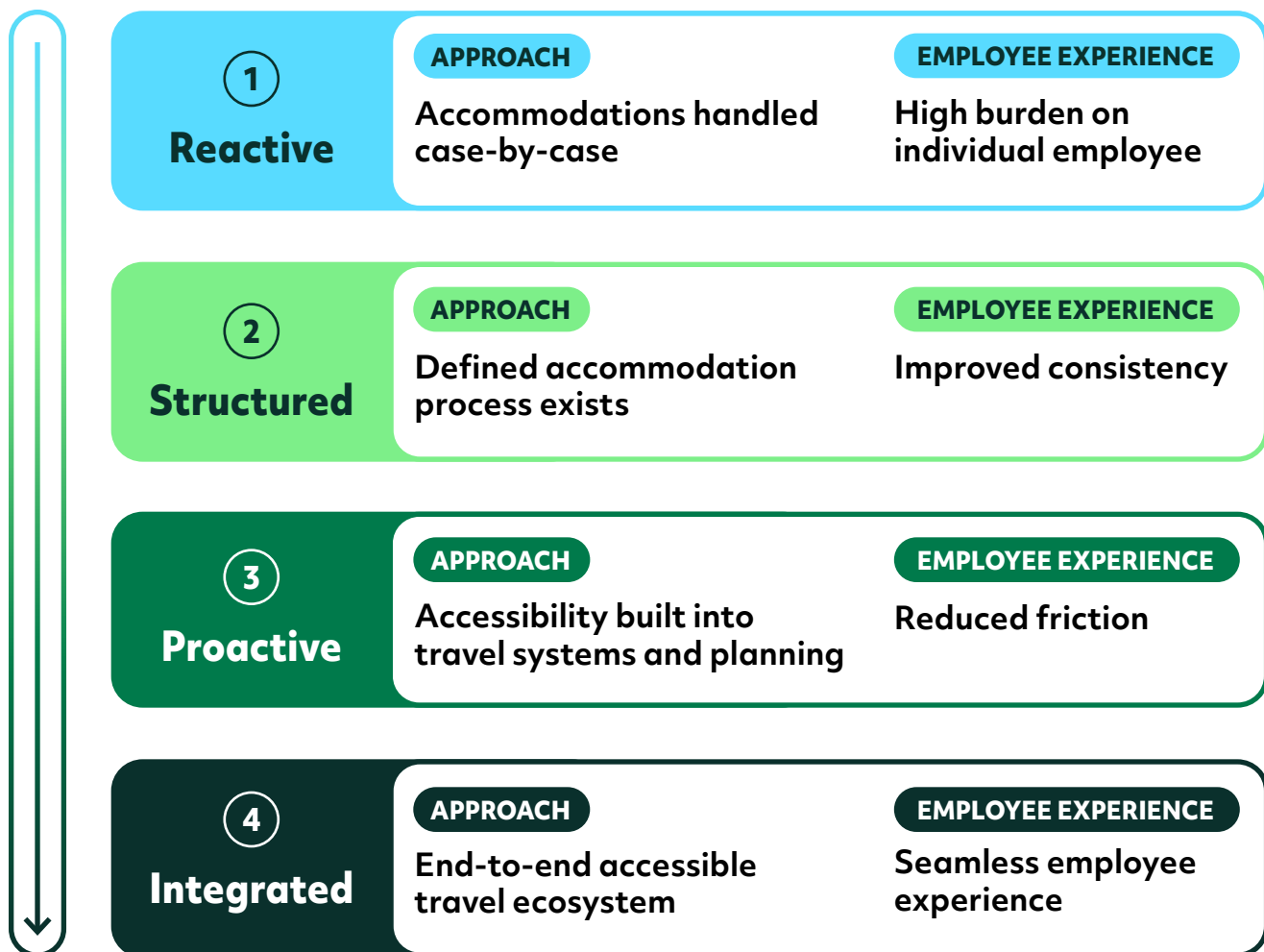
“It’s so much more complicated now than I ever could have imagined. I’m appreciative of the accommodations that are in place that allow me [to] continue contributing.”

- Eli Lilly employee and frequent business traveler

Accessible Travel Maturity Model

An accessible travel process should allow an employee to understand the trip's demands, request support through a trusted channel, receive confirmation that arrangements are in place, access help when plans change, and participate fully at the destination.

Organizations often evolve through **four stages**:



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1 Create a Single Point of Access

Rather than requiring employees to coordinate separately with hotels, airlines, transportation providers, and event organizers, organizations can provide a dedicated accommodation resource that manages travel support end-to-end.

Salesforce shared one of the clearest examples: a Travelers Requiring Special Assistance (TRSA) Desk within their Global Business Travel partner account. The desk supports disabled travelers with hotel requirements, seating, service animals, accessible ground transportation, disrupted travel, and damaged mobility equipment.

“The service desk will remove the anxiety and burden of that extra work so you can focus on your trip.”

- Accessibility Manager, Salesforce

Pull it into Practice

- ▶ Create one clearly communicated entry point for travel accommodation support.
- ▶ Establish one intake process for travel-related accommodations. The ideal practice is to allow accommodations to be requested through the same channels employees use for workplace accommodations.
- ▶ Define ownership across accommodations, travel, security, events, and travel-management vendors.
- ▶ Ensure the support model can respond when flights are canceled, equipment is damaged, or lodging changes unexpectedly. A 24/7 support path is ideal when possible.

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Use Reusable Travel Profiles without Over-Collecting Information

It can be valuable for both travelers and companies to explore a one-time intake process that records functional travel needs, so employees do not need to repeat their story or request support needs for every trip. Walmart described a similar concierge vision in which the travel provider can respond to needs already documented in the employee's profile.

"We want to get to the point where if I call in and I'm in a wheelchair, they already know. They already have that in their profile."

Pull it into Practice

- ▶ Store only the information needed to arrange support with accommodation profiles that include:
 - Seating preferences
 - Mobility needs
 - Accessible room requirements
 - Service animal information
 - Dietary requirements
 - Transportation support needs
- ▶ Allow employees to review and update preferences, including temporary needs.
- ▶ Provide more than one accessible way to contact the support team, such as email and phone.

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Build Accessibility into Planning, not just Booking

Accommodations frequently break down at the destination rather than during travel booking. It's a best practice for employers to ask about access needs before travel and to describe the actual conditions employees will encounter. That includes walking distances, hills, heat, long days, ground transportation, and the physical demands of the event.

Pull it into Practice

- ▶ Add an accessibility statement and accommodation request link to meeting invitations and event registration.
- ▶ Share practical details such as walking distances, terrain, weather exposure, schedule length, and transportation arrangements.
- ▶ Confirm who receives requests, how privacy is protected, and when the employee will hear back.
- ▶ Consider: Can a traveler with dietary restrictions, mobility needs, sensory disabilities, or medical requirements fully participate in your event without additional effort?

A useful intake prompt: "This trip may include extended walking, outdoor travel in hot weather, shuttle transportation, and full-day sessions. What support or adjustments would help you participate fully?"

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Train Managers and Protect Confidentiality

Managers are often the first and most critical point of support and success for employees, so ensuring that they have the knowledge to navigate these processes is critical. Leaders can become blockers when they do not understand the process, available resources, or the purpose of an accommodation. Johnson & Johnson shared the example of using an in-house occupational health team to help protect employee health information.

“It’s knowledge. It’s people leader knowledge.”

- Occupational Health Lead, Johnson & Johnson

Pull it into Practice

- ▶ Train managers to route requests through the appropriate process.
- ▶ Explain confidentiality expectations and the role of the accommodations team.
- ▶ Reinforce that accommodation enables successful performance and participation.

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Fund Accommodations Centrally Whenever Possible

One concern often raised by organizations is the impact of accommodation costs on individual team budgets. Many leading companies are using a centralized accommodation funding model that can cover accessibility-related travel expenses, including travel and daily expenses for a personal care attendant. The model keeps the cost from falling entirely on an individual team budget and empowers team members to request the support they need to be successful.

Another approach can be proactively providing travelers with a “menu” of approved and covered supports so that the travelers have information needed to plan accordingly.

Pull it into Practice

- ▶ Consider a centralized or shared funding model for disability-related travel costs.
- ▶ Document which costs are preapproved and which require review.
- ▶ Avoid making participation dependent on a manager’s discretionary budget.

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Accessible Travel Journey Checklist

BEFORE APPROVAL

The employee understands the trip's demands and knows how to request support.

BEFORE BOOKING

Recurring needs, temporary needs, seating, mobility, service animal, lodging, and companion or PCA requirements are addressed.

BEFORE DEPARTURE

Accessible hotel features and ground transportation are confirmed; the employee has a support contact and disruption plan.

IN TRANSIT

Airport assistance, communication access, seating, mobility-device handling, and connections are supported.

AT THE DESTINATION

Venue access, food, medication storage, rest, captions or interpreting, transportation, and emergency procedures are addressed.

WHEN PLANS CHANGE

The traveler can quickly reach someone who can rebook accessible flights, rooms, and transportation.

AFTER THE TRIP

The organization captures barriers and vendor performance so the next trip is easier.

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Policy and Process Questions for Employers to Consider:

- ? Can employees find one clear process for requesting travel accommodations?
- ? Can recurring needs be carried forward without repeated disclosure?
- ? Are temporary and situational needs covered?
- ? Are accessible arrangements verified before departure?
- ? Is help available during disruptions and emergencies?
- ? Are managers trained on travel accessibility and processes?

Where to Start

▶ **Map the Journey:** Identify every point where an employee must currently disclose, coordinate, verify, or troubleshoot an accommodation.

▶ **Assign Ownership:** Name the teams responsible for intake, booking, destination support, emergencies, funding, and vendor accountability.

▶ **Pilot and Learn:** Test the process with employees who have different access needs, then use their feedback to improve systems and vendor expectations.

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