



## How Technology Broadens Inclusivity for Those with Disabilities

🔗 technology DEI

**Summary:** Emerging technologies and changing work arrangements are increasing the banking industry's abilities to better serve disabled people — both customers and employees alike. We highlight new inclusive innovations within the industry that CFIs should consider taking advantage of.

The first ship to set sail specifically for recreation was the [Prinzessin Victoria Luise](#), which sailed from Hamburg, Germany in 1900 and took 180 passengers on a 35-day trip to various ports in Venezuela and the West Indies. In the century since, cruise ships have evolved and are now one of the most popular ways to vacation. The Symphony of the Seas, the world's largest cruise ship as of 2023, holds up to 9K passengers and crew and includes 18 decks, 23 swimming pools, and countless other features tailored to virtually every age group.

Beyond the ability to visit multiple destinations on vacation, cruise ships have become extremely popular because of the diversity of services they provide for all generations. In the same way that cruise ships consider the preferences and needs of everyone, financial institutions need to do the same thing when it comes to supporting customers and staff alike.

As community financial institutions (CFIs) seek to become more inclusive, it is time to cast a broader net with their efforts for both staff and customers who have disabilities. Features such as screen readers and text-captioned videos have become commonplace on financial institution websites as a way of assisting vision or hearing-impaired customers. However, there are new technologies emerging that CFIs should be aware of that can help them take their efforts to a whole new level.

### New Technologies CFIs Could Explore

Amazon recently revealed that it is launching an app that will allow devices to use Bluetooth to stream audio content directly to cochlear implants worn by individuals with extreme hearing loss — a group of roughly 737K people worldwide. Bypassing speakers and sending sound directly to the microphone within a cochlear implant provides individuals with a cleaner and clearer sound.

Similar innovations have been introduced in the banking world. UK financial institution NatWest Group [installed hearing loop systems](#) in all their branches to help customers with hearing aids hear speech more clearly. They've also partnered with SignVideo so that hearing-impaired customers and banking staff can communicate through a sign language interpreter via a SignVideo app.

New technology has also emerged that can step up the banking experience for visually impaired individuals on the payment front. French technology company Thales [recently introduced a voice payment card](#) that uses Bluetooth and a mobile app to vocalize the amount an individual is paying — either through an earphone or mobile speaker — at the point of sale. This technology helps protect visually impaired people from fraud or simple payment mistakes.

### Employee Advantages of Inclusivity

In the same way that new and emerging technologies make it easier for financial institutions to better serve customers with disabilities, they are also creating new work opportunities for people within these same demographics. Widespread acceptance of remote work as a viable employment option not only eliminates geographic constraints for hiring within the banking industry, but also enables organizations to employ disabled individuals who may not have the ability to commute to an office.

A recent study from the Economic Innovation Group found that the employment rate of people with disabilities has not only returned to the level prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but [it has exceeded it](#) and reached the highest level in a decade. This increase is fueled by both remote work arrangements and the overall dearth of qualified job applicants. According to the Bureau of Labor, [employment of people with disabilities reached 21.3% in 2022](#).

Beyond employing disabled individuals remotely, some financial institutions have made additional efforts to overcome biases and discrimination that previously made it difficult or impossible for people within this demographic to find employment. JPMorgan Chase began equipping managers with resources to help recruit and hire disabled individuals, such as sign language interpreters and closed captioning services, while other organizations are embracing sensory tools like noise-cancelling earbuds and stress balls for employees on the autism spectrum.

In some cases, financial institutions are even working with organizations such as Project Search and the National Industries for the Blind to help review their recruiting and hiring practices and assist in reaching disabled job candidates. In others, financial institutions are creating their own internal networks to support employees with disabilities. Bank of America, for instance, formed a [Disability Advocacy Network](#) to provide employees with disabilities opportunities for growth and professional development.

As CFIs work to enhance their inclusivity efforts for customers and employees alike, it is important to stay on top of new technological advancements that can assist disabled individuals. Embracing new technologies and remote work arrangements provides CFIs the ability to demonstrate care to their disabled customers, as well as reach new pools of employees that can also help expand the diversity of their organizations.

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## ECONOMY & RATES

Rates As Of: 10/04/2023 05:36AM (GMT-0700)			
Treasury	Yields	MTD Chg	YTD Chg
3M	5.62	0.07	1.20
6M	5.58	0.05	0.82
1Y	5.45	0.01	0.74
2Y	5.11	0.06	0.68
5Y	4.77	0.16	0.76
10Y	4.76	0.19	0.89
30Y	4.88	0.18	0.92
FF Market	FF Disc	IORR	

5.33	5.50	5.40
<b>SOFR</b>	<b>Prime</b>	<b><del>QBER</del></b>
5.33	8.50	5.32

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