



Making Space Launches a Workforce Program Building Disabled Talent Pipelines Into Aerospace and Aviation

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, October 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Applications open today](#) for the first cohort, focused on Colorado's fast-growing aerospace sector

[Making Space](#), the talent and learning platform working to close the disability employment gap, today launched [Ascend Aerospace](#), a new track of its flagship Ascend Fellowship for Disabled professionals. Applications open today: <https://app.making-space.com/opportunities/making-space-ascend-fellowship-program-ascend-aerospace>

Ascend Aerospace will give 100 Disabled professionals accessible, industry-aligned training while preparing hiring managers and recruiters to support them. Funded by Ability Central with additional philanthropic support, the program begins in Colorado before expanding to California.

"Meaningful employment creates pathways to financial independence, belonging, and the opportunity for people with disabilities to contribute their talents and shape the future of their industries. Ability Central is proud to support Making Space as it advances disability inclusion by connecting accessible career preparation with employer readiness, opening doors in aerospace and aviation where disabled talent has too often been overlooked," said Griffen Stapp, Executive Director of Ability Central and the California Communications Access Foundation (CCAF).

An industry competing for its next generation of talent

Colorado's aerospace workforce grew 14.4 percent between 2020 and 2025, according to the Colorado Chamber Foundation, with more than 61,000 jobs paying nearly twice the statewide average. That growth is slowing as Texas, Florida, Utah and other states compete for companies and workers, and the Foundation has named workforce development as central to Colorado's competitiveness.

The program helps Disabled people translate existing experience into aerospace careers through training, paid apprenticeships and internships. Disabled people remain one of the country's most underemployed talent pools, facing barriers from inaccessible recruitment to the risk of losing essential benefits as earnings rise. In 2025, 22.8 percent were employed, compared with 65.2 percent of non-disabled people, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"Aerospace has a workforce problem and Disabled people have an access problem, and these are the same problems seen from two sides. Ascend Aerospace closes the loop by preparing talent and employers," says Keely Cat-Wells, CEO and Founder of Making Space.

Built on a proven model

The Ascend Fellowship has already supported more than 250 Disabled professionals. In a GitLab Foundation-funded cohort of 100 Fellows, 97 percent completed the curriculum and 75 percent reached an employment outcome, with aggregate projected lifetime earnings of \$111 million and a benefit-to-cost ratio of 123-to-1.

The support behind the fellowship

Fellows receive free, permanent access to Making Space, including:

- Accessible, job-aligned courses designed and taught by Disabled professionals.
- Benefits navigation through Safe-to-Earn, an AI-powered tool showing how earnings interact with SSI, SSDI, Medicaid and ABLE accounts.
- Direct employer access through open roles, mentorship and interviews.
- A national peer community of Disabled professionals.

An advisory group of aerospace leaders, rocket scientists, engineers, Disabled technologists, veterans and workforce experts guides the program.

"The aerospace sector has a massive workforce shortage that is bad today and will be worse tomorrow. As a disabled person I have seen, first hand, the talent that has gone underutilized in our community. I know this untapped resource could be the solution these industries need, and the Ascend Aerospace program is the first step to meaningfully put that to the test." Said Eric Ingram, Ascend Aerospace Advisor, Founder and Principal Consultant at Ingram Insights and industry expert.

What employers gain

Employer partners gain lasting capability, including:

- A pre-qualified talent pipeline trained against role requirements they help define.
- Disabled-led manager and recruiter training on inclusive hiring, accommodations and retention.
- A hiring process review showing where qualified candidates are often screened out.
- Retention and advancement pathways that move Disabled employees beyond entry level.
- Reporting on hiring confidence, self-identification, placement and retention.
- Early access to Fellows ahead of open recruitment.

Employers interested in joining as a hiring or training partner can contact Taylor Rust at

partnerships@making-space.com.

About Making Space

Making Space is a talent acquisition and learning platform that helps companies hire, support and retain Disabled professionals while providing free upskilling, opportunities and community for Disabled talent. It supports a network of over 50,000 Disabled people and has trained more than 200,000 employees at companies including Red Bull, Salesforce and Netflix.

Learn more at making-space.com.

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