



Disability Recruitment. Workplace Mentoring. Digital Accessibility.

Joyce A. Bender

Joyce Bender is the Founder and CEO of Bender Consulting Services, Inc., and the Bender Leadership Academy, located in Pittsburgh, PA. Her focus for both organizations is employment for people with disabilities. As a woman living with epilepsy and hard of hearing, she dedicated her life to a crusade for youth and adults to gain the dream of competitive employment. She works tirelessly to break down the barriers and stigma that exist for people with disabilities.

In 1985, Joyce had a life-threatening accident due to epilepsy that caused a cerebral hemorrhage requiring subsequent brain surgery. Against all odds, Joyce recovered from this accident that left her with a 70 percent hearing loss in one ear and a realization that she had epilepsy. This accident changed the trajectory of her life and led to the founding of Bender Consulting Services, Inc. in 1995.

She serves as the Chair of the Epilepsy Association of Western and Central PA, the Vice-Chair of the American Association of People with Disabilities, on the President's Advisory Board for Carlow University, as a Trustee for The Bazelon Center on Mental Health Law, World Institute on Disability (WID), Homeless Children's Education Fund, Variety the Children's Charity, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera (CLO), Disability Rights of PA, and the Advisory Board of the FDR Memorial Legacy Committee.

Joyce has served as a disability employment expert for the U.S. State Department in Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Panama, Kazakhstan, Tunisia, Libya, and Nigeria. She conducted training for female entrepreneurs in business for Austria. She has been featured in periodicals including Reader's Digest, New York Times, Investor's Business Daily, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, and Chicago Tribune. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from Geneva College, and hosts the radio show, Disability Matters with Joyce Bender, on voiceamerica.com for over twenty years.

Joyce has received numerous awards and recognitions that include the following:

- 2024 Henry Viscardi Award Winner
- 2024 Women of Influence, Pittsburgh Business Times
- 2016 USBLN, Supplier of the Year Award
- 2015 Susan M. Daniels Mentoring Hall of Fame
- 2014 Catherine Variety Sheridan Humanitarian Award – Variety the Children's Charity
- 2013 AAPD Justice for All Corporate Award
- 2011 Epilepsy Foundation Hero of Epilepsy Award
- 2003 Bush Administration's New Freedom Initiative Award
- 1999 President's Award, received from President Clinton at the White House