

What is a Reasonable Accommodation?

The ADA defines an individual with a disability as a person who: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, (2) has a record or history of a substantially limiting impairment, or (3) is regarded or perceived by an employer as having a substantially limiting impairment.

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a qualified applicant or employee with a disability. The ADA applies to private employers with 15 or more employees and to state and local government employers. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces the employment provisions of the ADA.

Reasonable Accommodations may be needed during the application process, during the interview process, to the job, and after employment for advancements. This is not a demand for a specific accommodation/change rather it is a negotiation opportunity where you inform the potential employer of your need and they come up with solutions for accommodations that they can reasonably make. As each disability is unique to each individual accommodations need to be discussed to meet the specific needs of both the potential employer and perspective employee.

A qualified applicant or employee means that with or without a reasonable accommodation

During the Application Process

YES- Employers are required to provide "reasonable accommodation" - appropriate changes and adjustments -- to enable you to be considered for a job opening.

An employer does not have to provide a specific accommodation if it would cause an "undue hardship" that is, if it would require significant difficulty or expense. However, an employer cannot refuse to provide an accommodation solely because it entails some costs, either financial or administrative.

If the requested accommodation causes an undue hardship, the employer still would be required to provide another accommodation that does not.

Examples of a reasonable accommodation include but are not limited to:

- providing written materials in accessible formats, such as large print, braille, or audiotape
- providing readers or sign language interpreters
- ensuring that recruitment, interviews, tests, and other components of the application process are held in accessible locations
- providing or modifying equipment or devices
- adjusting or modifying application policies and procedures

Asking for an accommodation

You must inform the employer that you need some sort of change or adjustment to the application/interviewing process because of your disability. You can make this request **orally or in writing**, or someone else might make a request for you (e.g., a family member, friend, health professional, or other representative, such as a job coach).

When to inform an employer

Determining the best moment to tell a prospective employer about the need for reasonable accommodation on the job is a personal decision. Sometimes, applicants are not aware they may need a reasonable accommodation until they have more information about the job, its requirements, and the work environment. Some applicants choose to inform an employer during the application process after they better understand the job and its requirements. Others choose to wait until they have a job offer.

Although employers may not ask disability-related questions or require medical examinations at the pre-offer stage, they may do a wide variety of things to evaluate whether an applicant is qualified for the job, including the following:

- Employers may ask about an applicant's ability to perform specific job functions. For example, an employer may state the physical requirements of a job (such as the ability to lift a certain amount of weight, or the ability to climb ladders), and ask if an applicant can satisfy these requirements.
- Employers may ask about an applicant's non-medical qualifications and skills, such as the applicant's education, work history, and required certifications and licenses.
- Employers may ask applicants to describe or demonstrate how they would perform job tasks.

