

Successful Disability Hiring - From Recruiting to Retention

Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

OVR



OVR Mission: To assist Pennsylvanians with disabilities secure and maintain employment and independence

Presentation Objectives:

1. Debunking disability stereo types

Review best practices with regards to:

2. Recruiting practices
3. Accessible Applications
4. Accommodations and Effective Communication Tips
5. Interviews
6. Retention, Promotion and Corrective Actions

Preparing your business or organization for diversity talent, people who are differently Abled

Workforce talent comes in all sizes, genders, ages and abilities. Can you spot it? In the next slides let's explore differently Abled persons who left their mark on innovation and human progress.

Not all disabilities are evident or visible!



The many faces of disability

Thomas Edison



The many faces of disability

Stephen Hawking

Debunking stereo types- It's What A Person Can Do That Counts?



Recruiting Practices:

Is your web site and careers page disability friendly?

Are you prepared to offer an accommodation for a job interview?

Does your job application process allow flexibility to allow job candidates with cognitive disabilities an alternative to written applications or traditional structured interviews?

Does your organization have a policy on service animals and reasonable accommodations?

Is the building or location for conducting an interview accessible?

Are transportation resources available for those who cannot drive?

Accessible Applications

- Providing information regarding job vacancies in a format accessible to individuals with vision or hearing impairments, e.g., making information available in Braille, and by responding to job inquiries via TDDs or use of the telephone relay system;
- Screen reader friendly on-line applications;
- JAWS and speech friendly applications;
- Providing readers, interpreters, or other similar assistance during the application process;
- If used-appropriately adjusting or modifying employment-related examinations, e.g., by extending the time in which to complete an online examination for an applicant with a cognitive or neurological disability; and
- If required-ensuring an applicant with a mobility impairment has full access to testing locations, e.g., if an online test is given via a company kiosk, the kiosk must be physically accessible to the applicant with a mobility impairment.

Effective Communication Tips for Interviews

General Tips for Communicating with People that have a Disability

- It is perfectly acceptable to offer to shake hands when you are introduced to a person with a disability, even when the disability involves limited hand use or an artificial limb. Shaking hands with the left hand is also acceptable.
- You may offer to assist a person with a disability, but wait until your offer has been accepted. Then, ask for instructions on how you can best assist.
- Treat people with disabilities by addressing them just as you do everyone else in the same circumstance. If everyone is being addressed by first name, then by all means address the person with a disability the same.
- Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions such as "See you later," or "Did you hear about that?" that seem to relate to a person's disability.
- Ask questions if you are not sure about what to do. Don't be afraid.

Tips for Communicating with People Who are Visually Impaired

- Speak to the person when you approach him or her.
- Tell them who you are and don't raise your voice.
- When conversing in a group, remember to identify yourself and the person with whom you are speaking.
- Don't play with a service animals or distract it unless you ask the owner's permission first.
- Let the individual know when you are leaving.
- Don't try to lead the individual without asking permission first. Then, simply let the individual hold your arm and let him or her control his or her own movements.
- Be descriptive when giving directions; verbally give the person information that is visually obvious to people who can see. For example, if you are approaching steps, mention how many steps.

Effective Communication Tips for Interviews **Tips for Communicating** **with People Who are Hearing Impaired**

- Make sure you get the person's attention before you begin to speak. Just tap the individual on the shoulder if they are not facing you.
- Always look directly at the person and try to keep your face in the light away from shadows. Speak clearly in a normal tone of voice and avoid chewing gum or smoking while you talk. Try to use short, simple sentences.
- When the person is using a sign language interpreter, don't speak directly to the interpreter. Speak directly to the person.
- If you telephone an individual who is hard of hearing, let the phone ring longer than usual. Speak clearly and be prepared to repeat the reason for the call and who you are.
- If you do not have a Text Telephone (TTY), dial 711 to reach the national telecommunications relay service. This service can facilitate the call between you and an individual who uses a TTY.

Tips for Communicating with People with Mobility Impairments

- Try to place yourself at eye level with the person. Don't lean on the wheelchair or other assistive device.
- Do not condescend to a person in a wheelchair by treating them childishly, patting them on the head or shoulder.
- Ask before you try to assist the person by pushing the wheelchair.
- If a person is having a problem with opening a door, offer to assist him or her.
- When telephoning a person let the phone ring a long time to allow him or her to reach the phone.

Effective Communication Tips for Interviews

Tips for Communicating with People with Speech Impairments

- If you do not understand something the individual says, do not pretend that you do. Ask the individual to repeat what he or she said and then repeat it back.
- Take as much time as necessary to communicate and be patient.
- Try to ask questions which require only short answers or a nod of the head.
- Concentrate and pay extra attention to help you understand what the individual is saying.
- Don't attempt to help the person by finishing his or her sentences. Let the person speak for himself or herself.
- After trying to understand the person repeatedly, without success, ask the person if it is ok to communicate through writing as an alternative.

Tips for Communicating with People with Cognitive Disabilities

- Move from a public area with lots of distractions to a quieter more private area.
- Be prepared to repeat what you say, orally or in writing.
- In a non-patronizing way and without over assisting, ask the individual if you can help with filling out forms or explaining writing instructions. Wait for the individual to give you permission to assist. Let the individual have extra time for decision making.
- Be patient, flexible, and supportive. Take your time communicating so that everyone understands each other.

Always demonstrate Respect And Courtesy

Who is entitled to a reasonable accommodation?

Under Federal law, an individual with a disability is entitled to a reasonable accommodation.

An individual with a disability is a person who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- Has a record of such an impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such impairment, except, however, that an individual who is solely regarded as having a disability without meeting one of the other definitions is not entitled to reasonable accommodations.

Accommodation Considerations

A [job accommodation](#) (hyperlink) is an adjustment to a job or work environment that makes it possible for an individual with a disability to perform their job duties.

Accommodations may include:

- Specialized equipment, (AT)
- Modifications to the work environment
- Adjustments to work schedules or responsibilities.
- Job restructuring, modifying work schedules, reassignment to vacant positions;
- Acquiring or modifying equipment or devices, adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, or policies, and providing qualified readers or interpreters.

Source: U.S. DOL @ <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/jobaccommodations>

Accommodation Considerations

Not all people with disabilities (or even all people with the same disability) need the same accommodation.

- For example, a job applicant who is deaf may need a sign language interpreter during the job interview;
- An employee who is blind or who has low vision may need someone to read information posted on a bulletin board;
- An employee with diabetes may need regularly scheduled breaks during the workday to monitor blood sugar and insulin levels.

Title I of the ADA requires a discussion and exploration of potential accommodations (legislates creativity) between employees and employers, not use of a prescriptive or cookie cutter one size fits all approach.

Source: U.S. DOL @ <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/jobaccommodations>

Accommodation Resources and References

The only legal limitation on an employer's obligation to provide reasonable accommodation is that the changes or modifications may not cause "[undue hardship](#)" (hyperlink) to the employer. "Undue hardship" means significant difficulty, including accommodations that are overly extensive or disruptive, or which could impact the actual running of a business.

- **U.S. Department of Labor Resources on Job Accommodations**
- [ODEP Accommodations Topic Page](#)
- [Reasonable Accommodation for Employees and Applicants with Disabilities](#)
- [Maximizing Productivity: Accommodations for Employees with Psychiatric Disabilities](#)

Source: U.S. DOL @ <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/jobaccommodations>

Other Resources on Job Accommodations

- [Job Accommodation Network](#)
 - [Employees' Practical Guide to Negotiating and Requesting Reasonable Accommodations Under the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)
 - [Employers' Practical Guide to Negotiating and Requesting Reasonable Accommodations Under the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)
 - [Accommodation Ideas Based on Disability Type](#)
 - [JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource](#)
- [What are Reasonable Accommodations?](#)
- [Technology and Job Accommodations Bring Many Jobs Within Reach](#)
- [Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program \(Federal\)](#)

Source: U.S. DOL @ <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/jobaccommodations>

Before 1st day of work considerations:

Prior tour of work area, building and entrances, location of rest rooms and break areas.

Important for workers who are blind and may benefit from initial assistance from mobility instructors to negotiate the work environment.

Not all disabilities are evident or visible, a person with an anxiety or related MH condition may also benefit from work location orientation.

Retention:

Activities That Specifically Promote the Retention and Advancement of Employees with Disabilities:

- Discussing career expectations with each employee;
- Evaluating the employee's interests, talents, and skills, and developing appropriate goals;
- Encouraging lateral movements, job rotations, and team assignments that will give employees problem-solving skills and leadership opportunities;
- Facilitating networking by including individuals with disabilities in formal workgroups and informal employee gatherings;
- Encouraging mentoring;
- Ensuring training opportunities, and
- Emphasizing an employee's responsibility for self-development.
- Addressing poor work performance issues.

Managers and Supervisors should:

- Take actions to ensure a workplace free from a hostile and offensive environment and take immediate steps to correct such situations should they occur.
- Ensure that qualified disabled employees are fully considered in the filling of all vacant positions and training opportunities.
- Ensure that qualification standards of position descriptions and announcements are job-related and reflect the actual duties to be performed.
- Undertake training on disability awareness and employment.
- Survey work force to determine special needs of, or architectural barriers to, disability employment.
- Cooperate with EEO, HR, PHRC and other program officials in meeting requirements.
- Make reasonable accommodation to the known disabilities of applicants and employees; and assure that in cases of poor job performance every effort is made to minimize the effects on employees whose disabilities make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for them to be reassigned within the agency or transferred to another agency.

Corrective Actions

- Use progressive discipline.
- Review and address all potential barriers to improved work performance.
- Reach out to OVR or related disability programs for consultation.
- Be respectful and connect the individual to resources for personal assistance (SEAP) or career help (OVR, Community Rehabilitation Providers, CareerLink) to find new employment opportunities.

Expect and Celebrate Success

- Use recognition events, awards and news letters.
- Create and post video success stories.
- Encourage use of affinity or disAbility related employee resource groups.
- OVR success story.

Questions and Answers

Thank You!

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