

## Contents

**Page**

**Overview** 3

Making Requests 3

Role of the Reasonable Accommodations Coordinator

Role of Managers and Supervisors 4

Making the Process Interactive 5

Communicating About Reasonable Accommodations 5

**Definitions** 6

**The Process** 7

Fulfilling Requests 7

Verifying Disabilities 7

Analyzing Essential Functions 8

Reasonable Accommodations for Job Candidates 8

Confidentiality of Medical Information 8

**What Accommodations Are Reasonable?** 10

Personal Items 10

Undue Hardship 11

**Denying an RA Request** 12

Reassignments 12

Appeals Process 13

Conflict of Interest 13

**FAQs** 14

**Employee Communication** 17

**Appendix**

"Innovative Research on Employer Practices: Improving Employment for People with Disabilities"

Reasonable Accommodation Request Form

Reasonable Accommodation Request Record of Action Form

Authorization for Release of Medical Information Form

Reasonable Accommodation Evaluation and Essential Job Duties Disclosure Form

Reasonable Accommodation Evaluation Form

Sample Person With Disability Self-Identity Encouragement Statement

## Overview

[ORGANIZATION] is committed to providing qualified job candidates and employees who have disabilities with reasonable accommodations upon request, unless the accommodation would pose an undue financial and/or operational hardship for [ORGANIZATION].

Individuals may request a reasonable accommodation (RA) to participate in the application process, perform the functions of their job, or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment with [ORGANIZATION]. An interactive process is used to determine the best type of accommodation in each situation and whether the requested accommodation is reasonable.

When [ORGANIZATION] provides RAs to its candidates and employees, it removes barriers that prevent individuals from applying for jobs or performing jobs for which they are qualified, and it expands the pool of qualified workers. [ORGANIZATION] benefits from the talents of people who might otherwise be arbitrarily barred from employment.

**Employer Note Regarding Key Roles**

***Reasonable Accommodations Coordinator***

HR should identify and train at least one employee to serve as a designated Reasonable Accommodations Coordinator–

a role that may be full or part time, depending on the size of the organization. Back-up personnel should also be identified and trained in the event the RAC is not available when needed.

***Reasonable Accommodations Appeals Manager***

Someone in either HR or Legal should be designated to handle the reasonable accommodation appeals process. While such appeals are rare, the process must be transparent and described in the policy.

### Making Requests

Requests for an RA can be made verbally or in writing. All requests must be documented on the Reasonable Accommodation Request Form (see Appendix). If an initial request is made verbally, the individual should then complete the Request Form.

Requests usually come from an employee (existing or prospective), their supervisor or hiring manager, or someone in HR. In some cases, a family member, health professional or other representative acting on the individual’s behalf may make a request (e.g., notifying HR that someone has been hospitalized and an expected return-to-work date, a request for interpretive services).

Keep in mind that employees or job candidates may not use the specific words “reasonable accommodation” to initiate a request for an RA; they might refer to the issue they’re experiencing. This must be treated as a request. For example:

* “I’m having trouble getting to work on time because of my medical treatment.”
* “My wheelchair can’t fit under the desk.”
* “Is there flexibility regarding the time allocated to take this test?”

### Role of the Reasonable Accommodations Coordinator

The designated Reasonable Accommodations Coordinator’s (RAC) role is to:

* Review and process all requests for RAs
* Act as the primary decision maker and arbiter for any requests
* Request and review medical documents, as needed, to confirm that an applicant or employee requesting an RA is an “individual with a disability” and whether the requested accommodation is necessary to:
* Enable the person to participate in the selection process for a job
* Perform the essential functions of a position
* Access the normal benefits and privileges of employment
* Collaborate with external subject matter experts and/or appropriate internal staff (e.g., managers/supervisors, HR, Facilities, Finance, Legal, Safety, Security, IT) to make informed decisions regarding approval or denial of an RA
* Collect and track information regarding the RA process at each key step (e.g., initial request, nature of accommodation, time to fulfill, cost of accommodation, satisfaction level of all parties) and provide a quarterly report to [NAME OF FUNCTION].
* Serve as primary contact for individuals with disabilities, managers and supervisors, and any other parties involved on a need-to-know basis throughout the process
* Provide an on-going assessment of the RA program.

The RAC is responsible for all recordkeeping and tracking related to RA requests, including:

* Number of RA requests through the job application and selection process and whether those requests are granted or denied
* Number of RA requests from employees and prospective employees and whether those requests are granted or denied
* Job titles for which RAs have been requested
* Number and types of RA requests for each job that have been approved and denied
* Reasons for denials of RA requests
* Timeframe for processing each RA request
* Sources of technical assistance consulted in trying to identify possible reasonable accommodations.

### Role of Managers and Supervisors

The more actively engaged and supportive managers/supervisors are in this process, the better. They should work closely with the RAC to implement all aspects of the RA policies and guidelines.

The role of a manager/supervisor in this process is to:

* Consult with HR if they observe or learn about a candidate’s or employee’s need for an RA
* Determine whether the individual can perform the essential job functions and, where necessary, assess whether an RA can be made to enable the individual to safely perform these functions (see the Reasonable Accommodations Assessment Form in the Appendix)
* Identify the individual’s abilities and limitations and collaborate with the person on finding potential accommodations
* Work with HR, when requested, to obtain medical information regarding the disability and the individual’s functional limitations. (Note: Managers will not request or have access to medical information provided by health care professionals. HR will make such requests and store this information consistent with Healthcare Privacy regulations).

**Note:** It is a violation of [ORGANIZATION]’s policies to discriminate or retaliate against qualified job candidates or employees because they need, or may need, a reasonable accommodation for a disability. Violations of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

### Making the Process Interactive

The RA process should be an interactive one that involves the mutual sharing of information and ideas between the individual with a disability, that person’s manager and the RAC. “Interactive” is characterized by direct, candid and mutually cooperative communication that helps the RAC make a well-considered and informed decision to either grant or deny the RA request.

The process is an opportunity to:

* Obtain and exchange information regarding what a person with a disability needs to contribute to his/her fullest potential
* Consider accommodation alternatives that meet both the business and personal needs of the parties involved
* Consult, if needed, with internal and/or external subject matter experts.

### Communicating About RAs

HR should communicate that a description of [ORGANIZATION]’s reasonable accommodation procedures and any related forms are readily available, using these channels:

* Careers web page
* Intranet
* Interview process
* New employee orientation
* Manager training guides
* Appropriate company meetings
* Annual benefits open enrollment
* Anywhere other HR information is posted.

In cases where there is a concern over an employee’s performance, an RA can be noted along with other resources (e.g., training and development, EAP, tuition reimbursement) as a possible solution to the performance issue.

## Definitions

**Disability** – A person with physical, medical, mental or psychological impairment; or a history or record of such an impairment; or being regarding as having such an impairment.

**Qualified Candidate or Employee –** An individual with a disability who satisfies the requisite skill, experience, education and other job-related requirements of a position and who—with or without reasonable accommodation—can perform the essential functions of that position or can complete the application and selection process.

**Essential Functions** – Duties that are fundamental to a position that the individual holds or desires that he/she cannot do the job without performing them. A function can be “essential” if, among other things:

* The position exists specifically to perform that function
* Only a limited number of employees are available to perform the function
* The function is so specialized and the individual is hired based on their ability to perform the function
* The function cannot be delegated.

Evidence of what constitutes an essential function may include, but is not limited to: RAC’s judgment; written job descriptions; the amount and/or proportion of time spend performing the function; the consequences of not requiring a function; and the work experience of incumbents.

**Reasonable Accommodation (RA)** – A change or adjustment that enables a person with a disability to apply for a job, perform job duties, or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment that are equal to those enjoyed by similarly situated employees without disabilities. The change/adjustment promotes equal employment opportunity for an individual with a disability.

There are three categories of RAs:

1. Modification or adjustments to a job application and selection process to permit an individual with a disability to be considered for a job (e.g., providing application forms in alternative formats like large print or Braille, providing a sign language interpreter, or allowing extra time to take a test)
2. Modifications or adjustments to enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of the job (e.g., providing phone amplification, computer screen magnification, or a flexible work arrangement)
3. Modifications or adjustments that enable employees with disabilities to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment (e.g., ensuring training or special events hosted by [ORGANIZATION] are held in locations that are physically accessible, making the cafeteria more accessible, and accommodating employees during training programs and presentations).

## The Process

### Fulfilling Requests

If there is more than one possible accommodation, [ORGANIZATION] will give primary consideration to the individual’s preference. The RAC does have discretion, however, to choose among various accommodations that enable the individual to perform the essential job functions. If a different accommodation is granted, the RAC should document the rationale for the alternative selection as part of the recordkeeping process and follow up to see if the accommodation is meeting the identified need to everyone’s satisfaction.

As a general rule, the decision on an RA request should be made within 10 business days. If the RA cannot be completed within a 10-day period, the person with a disability—and the person’s manager, if any— should be given written notification that documents the delay, reason (e.g., extenuating circumstances such a delay in acquiring necessary equipment), and expected timing for completing the process.

If fulfillment of the request is delayed beyond 30 business days and all related documentation has been submitted, the RAC should notify the person/department responsible for appeals with an explanation of the reason for the delay and expected timing for completion.

### Verifying Disabilities

When a disability or the need for an accommodation is not obvious, [ORGANIZATION] may ask candidates and employees for reasonable documentation about the disability and related functional limitations. [ORGANIZATION] may require only the documentation that is needed to establish that a person has a disability, and that the disability necessitates a reasonable accommodation. Such documentation may include:

* Past, present and expected future nature, severity and duration of the impairment (e.g., functional limitations, symptoms, side effects of any treatments)
* Types of activities the impairment limits
* Extent of the limitations
* Why the individual requires an accommodation—either in general or a specific type—and how the RA will assist the individual to apply for a job, perform the essential functions of the job, or enjoy a benefit of the workplace.

In limited circumstances, medical examinations or more detailed medical documentation may be needed to determine whether an employee can perform the essential functions of the job and what accommodations may be appropriate. The RAC should inform the individual why the provided documentation is insufficient and what additional information is needed. Any additional requests for information should specify what type of information is needed regarding the disability, its functional limitations, and the need for reasonable accommodation.

The individual requesting an accommodation may be asked to sign a limited release allowing [ORGANIZATION] to submit a list of specific questions to the health care or vocational professional or have [ORGANIZATION]’s own physician contact the individual’s heath care provider. (See Authorization for the Release of Medical Information in Appendix).

[ORGANIZATION] may *not* request medical information when:

* Both the disability and the need for reasonable accommodation are obvious, or
* The individual already provided [ORGANIZATION] with sufficient information to document the existence of the disability and functional limitations, unless the disability is temporary or the condition is subject to change.

If an employee has a visible or apparent disability, but there is a question as to whether the requested accommodation would be effective, a subject matter expert should be consulted.

### Analyzing Essential Functions

The reasonable accommodation process often can be accomplished without a formal analysis of the job’s essential functions and the employee’s job-related limitations. For example, if an employee who uses a wheelchair requests that a desk be elevated on blocks and that accommodation is implemented, the process is completed without a formal analysis of the essential job functions.

Other situations may require an analysis to determine whether the employee can perform the essential functions of the position and if the request is granted, whether the accommodation is reasonable, if there is an alternative/vacant position they could perform, or if the accommodation presents undue hardship to [ORGANIZATION].

### Reasonable Accommodations for Job Candidates

Job candidates with disabilities who want to request an RA must complete the Reasonable Accommodation Form (see Appendix), which should be made available at the first possible opportunity in the application process. The RAC is responsible for helping candidates complete the form and processing their requests. A copy of the form goes to the candidate, and the RAC keeps the original form.

The RAC should not speculate that just because a candidate requests an RA during the hiring process that the individual will also need an RA to perform the job if hired. The candidate may or may not need an RA upon hire, and if an accommodation is needed, it may not be the same type or degree as the one needed during the application and selection process.

It is generally the responsibility of the individual with the disability to request an accommodation. [ORGANIZATION] must reasonably accommodate disabilities when made aware of them; the organization is not responsible for accommodating any disability that is not observable or made known. Once [ORGANIZATION] is aware of a candidate’s disability, the supervisor and RAC should initiate discussions about an RA and initiate the request process.

### Confidentiality of Medical Information

All [ORGANIZATION] personnel must respect employee confidentiality. An employee’s request for an RA and all steps taken to review the request and provide any accommodation should be treated as a confidential matter. Information should be disclosed only on a need-to-know basis.

When an employee requests an accommodation, all documentation and information concerning the individual’s medical condition or medical history must be collected on forms separate from other personnel-related forms and maintained in separate medical files. The information shall be treated as confidential medical records. Medical information may be provided to: {*Note to employer: Please verify with your legal adviser}*

* Supervisors/managers who need to be informed about work restrictions or reasonable accommodations
* First-aid and safety personnel who need to be informed if the disability requires emergency treatment
* Government compliance officials
* Workers’ compensation offices that need information as required by law
* Insurance providers who may require such information
* Other [ORGANIZATION] authorized personnel who need to be consulted in order to identify, obtain and install the accommodation solution.

Unauthorized disclosure of confidential medical information can result in disciplinary measures*.* {*Note to employer: Please consult with your legal adviser as to appropriate measures.}*

## What Accommodations Are Reasonable? How do you Determine a Reasonable Accommodation?

Selecting a reasonable accommodation depends upon the circumstances of each case. Examples of reasonable accommodations include, but are not limited to, the following:

* Making facilities accessible to and usable by people with disabilities (e.g., providing ramps, restroom grab bars, and signage)
* Restructuring jobs (e.g., reallocating non-essential keyboarding, telephone or other clerical assignments among employees, assignment of non-essential tasks to others, eliminating non-essential tasks)
* Modifying work schedules (e.g., permitting part-time work schedules, alternative starting and ending times, telecommuting)
* Providing or modifying equipment, devices or materials (e.g., raising a desk on boards for an employee who uses a wheelchair, providing flashing lights and volume controls on intercoms and telephones, installing text readout telephones, providing large print computer display programs, or materials in alternative formats such as Braille, audio tape, enlarged print)
* Providing qualified readers, interpreters, or other support services during the application, interview, and testing processes, and during training and other employment-related activities, including social functions.
* Changing workplace practices, such as emergency evacuation procedures or security requirements for nearby parking
* Providing leave
* Arranging for transfer or reassignment to a vacant position.

**Note:** The RAC must comply with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), a federal law that requires employers to allow employees a certain amount of leave time for their own health conditions or to care for certain family members with serious health conditions.

### Personal Items

[ORGANIZATION] is not required to provide personal items needed both on and off the job, such as hearing aids, prosthetic limbs, wheelchairs, or eyeglasses. Such items may, however, constitute an RA where they are specifically designed to meet job-related—not personal—needs. One example would be eyeglasses that enable an employee to view a computer monitor, which may be unnecessary outside the office.

RAs may also include permitting an employee to use aids or services that the employer is not otherwise required to provide. For example, while [ORGANIZATION] may not provide a motorized scooter, it might make a reasonable accommodation to provide an on-site storage area for a scooter.

The RAC should advise employees who have received an RA that they have a duty to notify HR if at some point in the future they no longer require the accommodation. The RAC should periodically review the continuing need for RAs, and whether provided accommodations continue to be effective and satisfactory to all concerned parties.

### Undue Hardship

A requested accommodation is not a reasonable accommodation if it imposes an undue hardship for [ORGANIZATION]. An undue hardship may exist when an accommodation is significantly difficult, unduly costly, extensive, substantial, or disruptive, or would change the nature or operation of the business. Determination of undue hardship should be based on several factors, including:

* Nature and cost
* Overall financial resources
* Number of employees at the facility
* [ORGANIZATION]’s operation, structure and functions within the workforce, and the geographic distribution of work sites (e.g., requirement to travel between sites may be essential to a job)
* Impact of the accommodation on the operation of the facility (e.g., clean room requirements).

## Denying an RA Request

If HR and the employee/prospective employee cannot agree on a reasonable accommodation that is effective and does not impose an undue hardship, the request denial must be documented using the Reasonable Accommodation Denial Form (see Appendix).

Examples of why a request might be denied include: inadequate medical documentation to establish that the individual has a disability or needs reasonable accommodation; the requested accommodation would not be effective; and the accommodation would pose an undue hardship for [ORGANIZATION]).

The denial form must document:

* The reason for the denial
* The name and job title of the person who made the decision
* If a specific requested accommodation is denied and another offered in its place, the reasons for the denial and the reasons [ORGANIZATION] believes the chosen accommodation will be effective
* Information about the individual’s right to file an EEO complaint and to invoke any other applicable statutory processes
* Information about the availability of the appeals process.

**Note:** Your organization needs to develop and communicate your appeals process. Ideally, someone outside the RAC’s management hierarchy should be designated to resolve RA appeals, and your Legal department be consulted before a final decision is rendered and communicated. The appeal process should take no longer than 30 days, and the person designated to handle appeals should communicate the final decision and accompanying rationale both verbally and in writing to the employee.

The Reasonable Accommodation Denial Form should be attached to the Reasonable Accommodation Request Form. Before notifying the individual of the denial, the RAC should consider consulting with appropriate Legal and HR personnel to get agreement on the decision.

### Reassignment

If no effective accommodation will allow an employee to perform the essential functions of the job, a job reassignment may be the “last resort.” [ORGANIZATION] is under no obligation to create a new position or move other employees from their jobs in order to create a vacancy. Reassignment may be made only to a vacant position and when the person with a disability meets the qualifications.

HR is responsible for searching for a reassignment and consulting with the affected employee to determine whether he/she:

* Wants to limit the search in any way
* Is qualified for a particular job
* Would need a reasonable accommodation to perform the essential functions of the new position.

In cases where reassignment is the only alternative, HR should explain to employees why they cannot be accommodated in their current positions and find out what parameters, if any, they would consider in a reassignment. HR should inquire whether an employee is willing to be reassigned:

* Outside the facility or outside the commuting area and, if so, to what locations
* To a different type of position for which they are qualified and, if so, to what type(s)
* To a different area within the department and, if so, to which one(s)
* To a lower grade position—if reassignment to the same pay grade is not feasible—and, if so, down to what level.

### Appeal Process

When [ORGANIZATION] is unable to fulfill a request for an RA, an employee or job candidate may appeal the decision within 10 business days of the denial. [*Note to employer: You need to determine who will manage the appeal process.*} The person in this job function will:

* Review the RA request and all related documentation, standards, procedures and potential accommodations considered
* Meet and/or consult with the individual or/and others involved parties
* Evaluate the effectiveness of the request and that it does not create an undue hardship, giving primary consideration to the individual’s preferences.

[ORGANIZATION] must issue a written determination within 15 business days of the appeal. If the requested accommodation is determined to be effective and does not create an undue hardship, the determination will specify the type of accommodation and, if necessary, direct the appropriate [ORGANIZATION] representative to implement it promptly.

### Conflict of Interest

The RAC and other HR personnel will be recused from handling, investigating or making final decisions if an individual files an appeal or complaint challenging [ORGANIZATION]’s handling of an RA request. This recusal is a safeguard against any actual or perceived “conflicts of interest.”

## FAQs

Note: Be sure to obtain approval on these FAQs from HR and Legal before distributing them within your organization. You may want to add others, based on specific experience in your workplace.

**Q: Is there a centralized budget for accommodations to offset the financial impact on smaller departments? If so, how do we access these funds?**

**A:** *[Note: Creating a centralized budget for reasonable accommodations and communicating its existence is a best practice. Establishing this budget and making it known reduces the likelihood that a manager would be disinclined to provide an RA because it could have an unanticipated impact on their department budget.]*

**Q: How should I counsel a hiring manager who asks if a candidate was referred to us by an organization that serves people with disabilities? Can the manager ask about the nature of the individual’s disability?**

**A:** No, it is neither legal nor appropriate to inquire about the nature of an individual’s disability if that candidate is referred by an organization that serves people with disabilities. This question is akin to asking people of color about their national origins. The conversation should focus on the essential duties of the job; the hiring manager can use a behavioral interview approach to ask a candidate about prior experience performing those duties, including how the person would go about getting the work done.

If candidates choose to disclose details regarding their disabilities, you can thank them for their candor and use the opportunity to reaffirm [ORGANIZATION}’s commitment to including people with disabilities in the workforce. You can also indicate that, if they are selected, they will be given information about the RA process, in case it would be useful. You should also ask them if they would like to request an accommodation during the selection process. (e.g., accessible parking and building access, telecommunications support during phone interviews, large print materials).

**Q: What if an employee contacts HR, saying they have a friend/relative with a disability who has been unable to find a job? Where should they be referred to learn about whether we might have a job that matches their skills and experience?**

**A:** [ORGANIZATION] welcomes candidate referrals, including people with disabilities. [ORGANIZATION]’s career web page is the best place to refer employees who want to know about current openings. On rare occasions, hiring managers may be open to conducting an exploratory interview—a general conversation with a candidate regarding his/her skills and interests and the associated positions the organization typically has to offer. This conversation is not the same as interview for an open position, and it should be made clear to the individual that the discussion is for exploratory purposes only. To be considered for any job openings, the person would need to follow the normal application procedure.

**Q: What about colleagues who ask for advice and who are concerned about potentially saying the wrong thing to someone with a disability? Is there some kind of etiquette resource available?**

A: *[Note: If you have purchased “Hiring and Including Employees with Disabilities: A Guide for Hiring Managers” from Deb Dagit Diversity LLC, you can refer them to the handout that accompanies that resource. There are also other resources listed at debdagitdiversity.com/resources.]*

**Q: A manager said, “I hired a person with a disability once, and it did not work out. I do not want to go through that experience again. Why should I take another chance?” How should I counsel him?**

**A:** Ask the manager to replace the words “person with a disability” with “woman,” “person of color,” or another under-represented group, and ask if that statement be fair, accurate or acceptable. While a prior experience may have made a lasting impression, it should not be used to make generalizations about a person who shares similar demographic characteristics. Each person and situation is unique.

**Q: A manager says she suspects that an employee’s performance issue is related to a disability? What should I counsel her to say to the employee?**

**A:** After clearly stating the nature of the performance issue, the manager should indicate the range of resources she and [ORGANIZATION] can make available, which may include: internal learning and development programs, tuition reimbursement, 1:1 coaching, Employee Assistance Program, and workplace accommodations. Managers should review each of these resources during any performance management conversations, whether or not they suspect the person has a disability. By making this a regular habit, the manager will be assured these resources are well known and more likely to be utilized when needed.

**Q: How should I respond to an employee’s concern that a colleague with a disability is receiving “special treatment” and/or making his job more difficult because he has to help the person?**

A: Start by making sure you understand what’s driving the concern so you can determine how best to address the problem. What’s the issue? Workload? A particular task? Perceptions of favoritism? An interpersonal conflict with the employee who has received the accommodation?

At some point in your conversation with the concerned employee, be sure to reiterate [ORGANIZATION]’s commitment to fully including people with disabilities and state that this commitment is driven both by legal requirements and the values of the organization. Be sure to maintain confidentiality by avoiding any discussion about the circumstances, diagnosis, nature of accommodation, or other details associated with the employee with the disability. If asked directly, you must state that this information is confidential.

After your conversation, send a follow-up email with a brief summary of the conversation and a link to the non-discrimination policy and RA procedures to the employee who raised the concern. Thank the person sincerely for coming forward and being candid about the concern. Then follow up with the employee again in a few weeks to see if further discussion or explanation of the RA process is necessary.

**Q: How should I counsel a hiring manager who asks a candidate what kinds of accommodations the person would need to perform the essential duties of the job?**

**A:** Generally, the hiring manager should wait until after the offer is extended and accepted to engage in this conversation. In the interview process, the focus of the conversation should be about the essential duties of the job and include behavior-based questions about how the individual would perform those duties.

**Q: What should I say to a manager who hasn’t documented the essential duties of a job she’s recruiting for?**

**A:** Encourage the manager to create a detailed job description. If one is not readily available, you can ask the manager to complete the Reasonable Accommodation Evaluation Form (see Appendix) and add the information to the job description. The form covers the types of information most candidates for office-based jobs need to determine whether they might need an accommodation. If the position is not office based, the hiring manager should use forms available through OSHA to document the job requirements.

**Q: What should I tell a manager to do if a person with a disability turns out to be a poor performer? What are options?**

**A:** An employee with a disability is subject to the same performance standards as an employee who does not have a disability. Managers have an obligation to provide direct and specific feedback about any performance issues/concerns regarding the essential duties of the job. As part of this feedback, the manager should offer the list of available resources, which may include: internal learning and development programs, tuition reimbursement, 1:1 coaching, Employee Assistance Program, and workplace accommodations. [ORGANIZATION]’s performance improvement process should be applied and clearly communicated to the employee.

**Q: A manager says he received a complaint or request from a customer who says she does not want to do business with a [ORGANIZATION] employee who has a disability because it makes her “uncomfortable.” How should I counsel the manager?**

**A:** If the employee’s job performance is satisfactory, and the only issue is the customer’s discomfort, encourage the manager to inform her about [ORGANIZATION]’s commitment to fully including people with disabilities, as well as other diverse employees in the workforce. You should make it very clear that the company will not consider changing roles or responsibilities based solely on a customer expressing discomfort with some dimension of human difference.

## Employee Communication

Note: Be sure to obtain approval from HR and Legal before including any of the following information in employee communication materials.

## Reasonable Accommodations for Disabilities

[ORGANIZATION] is committed to providing qualified job candidates and employees who have disabilities with reasonable accommodations upon request, unless the accommodation would pose an undue financial and/or operational hardship for [ORGANIZATION].

You may request a reasonable accommodation (RA) to:

* Participate in the job application process
* Perform the essential functions of your job
* Enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment with [ORGANIZATION].

### Overview

Requests for an RA can be made verbally or in writing. All requests must be documented on the Reasonable Accommodation Request Form. If an initial request is made verbally, the individual should then complete the Request Form. If necessary, a family member, health professional or other representative acting on your behalf may make a request (e.g., notifying HR that you are hospitalized and an expected return-to-work date, a request for interpretive services). The Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator (RAC) handles all requests.

The RA process at [ORGANIZATION] is an interactive one that involves the mutual sharing of information and ideas between you, your manager and the RAC. “Interactive” is characterized by direct, candid and mutually cooperative communication that helps the RAC make a well-considered and informed decision to either grant or deny the RA request.

**Note:** It is a violation of [ORGANIZATION]’s policies to discriminate or retaliate against qualified job candidates or employees because they need, or may need, a reasonable accommodation for a disability. Violations of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

### Important Definitions

The definitions of these terms are important to the RA process:

**Disability** – A person with physical, medical, mental or psychological impairment; or a history or record of such an impairment; or being regarding as having such an impairment. (Note: This definition is specified under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.)

**Essential Functions** – Duties that are fundamental to a position that the individual holds or desires that he/she cannot do the job without performing them. A function can be “essential” if, among other things:

* The position exists specifically to perform that function
* Only a limited number of employees are available to perform the function
* The function is so specialized and the individual is hired based on their ability to perform the function
* The function cannot be delegated.

Evidence of what constitutes an essential function may include, but is not limited to: RAC’s judgment; written job descriptions; the amount and/or proportion of time spend performing the function; the consequences of not requiring a function; and the work experience of incumbents.

**Reasonable Accommodation (RA)** – A change or adjustment that enables a person with a disability to apply for a job, perform job duties, or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment that are equal to those enjoyed by similarly situated employees without disabilities. The change/adjustment promotes equal employment opportunity for an individual with a disability.

There are three categories of RAs:

1. Modification or adjustments to a job application and selection process to permit an individual with a disability to be considered for a job (e.g., providing application forms in alternative formats like large print or Braille, providing a sign language interpreter, or allowing extra time to take a test)
2. Modifications or adjustments to enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of the job (e.g., providing phone amplification, computer screen magnification, or a flexible work arrangement)
3. Modifications or adjustments that enable employees with disabilities to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment (e.g., ensuring training or special events hosted by [ORGANIZATION] are held in locations that are physically accessible, making the cafeteria more accessible, and accommodating employees during training programs and presentations).

### Fulfilling Requests

If there is more than one possible accommodation, [ORGANIZATION] will give primary consideration to your preference. The RAC does have discretion, however, to choose among various accommodations that enable you to perform the essential job functions. If a different accommodation is granted, the RAC should document the rationale for the alternative selection as part of the recordkeeping process and follow up to see if the accommodation is meeting the identified need to everyone’s satisfaction.

As a general rule, the decision on an RA request is made within 10 business days. If the RA cannot be completed within a 10-day period, you and your manager will be given written notification that documents the delay, reason (e.g., extenuating circumstances such a delay in acquiring necessary equipment), and expected timing for completing the process.

### Verifying Disabilities

When a disability or the need for an accommodation is not obvious, [ORGANIZATION] may ask you for reasonable documentation about your disability and related functional limitations. [ORGANIZATION] may require only the documentation that is needed to establish that you have a disability, and that the disability necessitates a reasonable accommodation. Such documentation may include:

* Past, present and expected future nature, severity and duration of the impairment (e.g., functional limitations, symptoms, side effects of any treatments)
* Types of activities the impairment limits
* Extent of the limitations
* Why the individual requires an accommodation—either in general or a specific type—and how the RA will assist the individual to apply for a job, perform the essential functions of the job, or enjoy a benefit of the workplace.

In limited circumstances, medical examinations or more detailed medical documentation may be needed to determine whether you can perform the essential functions of the job and what accommodations may be appropriate.

### Confidentiality of Medical Information

All [ORGANIZATION] personnel are required to respect employee confidentiality. Your request for an RA and all steps taken to review the request and provide any accommodation will be treated as a confidential matter. Information will be disclosed only on a need-to-know basis.

When you request an accommodation, all documentation and information concerning your medical condition or medical history must be collected on forms separate from other personnel-related forms and maintained in separate medical files. The information will be treated as confidential medical records.

Medical information may be provided to: {*Note to employer: Please verify with your legal adviser}*

* Supervisors/managers who need to be informed about work restrictions or reasonable accommodations
* First-aid and safety personnel who need to be informed if the disability requires emergency treatment
* Government compliance officials
* Workers’ compensation offices that need information as required by law
* Insurance providers who may require information such information
* Other [ORGANIZATION] authorized personnel who need to be consulted in order to identify, obtain and install the accommodation solution.

### What Accommodations Are Reasonable?

The reasonableness of an accommodation depends upon the circumstances of each case. Examples of reasonable accommodations include, but are not limited to, the following:

* Making facilities accessible to and usable by people with disabilities
* Restructuring jobs
* Modifying work schedules
* Providing or modifying equipment, devices or materials
* Providing qualified readers, interpreters, or other support services during the application, interview, and testing processes, and during training and other employment-related activities, including social functions.
* Changing workplace practices (e.g., emergency evacuation procedures or security requirements for nearby parking)
* Providing leave
* Arranging for transfer or reassignment to a vacant position.

#### Personal Items

[ORGANIZATION] is not required to provide personal items that you need both on and off the job, such as hearing aids, prosthetic limbs, wheelchairs, or eyeglasses. Such items may, however, constitute an RA where they are specifically designed to meet job-related—not personal—needs. One example would be eyeglasses that enable you to view a computer monitor, which you may not need outside the office.

RAs may also include permitting you to use aids or services that the employer is not otherwise required to provide. For example, while [ORGANIZATION] may not provide you with a motorized scooter, it might make a reasonable accommodation so you have a place on site to store the scooter.

#### Undue Hardship

An accommodation is not a reasonable accommodation if it imposes an undue hardship for [ORGANIZATION]. An undue hardship may exist when an accommodation is significantly difficult, unduly costly, extensive, substantial, or disruptive, or would change the nature or operation of the business.

### Denial of an RA Request

If you and the RAC cannot agree on an accommodation that is effective and does not impose an undue hardship, the request denial will be documented on a Reasonable Accommodation Denial Form. Examples of why a request might be denied include: inadequate medical documentation to establish that the individual has a disability or needs an RA; the requested accommodation would not be effective; or the accommodation would pose an undue hardship for [ORGANIZATION]).

You may appeal a denied RA request within 10 business days of the denial. [Note: Describe your appeals process here.]

### Reassignment

If no effective accommodation will allow you to perform the essential functions of the job, a job reassignment may be the “last resort.” [ORGANIZATION] is under no obligation to create a new position or move other employees from their jobs in order to create a vacancy for you. Reassignment may be made only to a vacant position and when you meet the job qualifications.

# APPENDIX

**CORNELL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
EMPLOYMENT AND DISABILITY INSTITUTE  
STATE-OF-THE-SCIENCE CONFERENCE**

**"Innovative Research on Employer Practices:**

**Improving Employment for People with Disabilities."**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY PATRICIA A. SHIU, DIRECTOR**  
U.S. Department Of Labor – Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs

Tuesday, October 22, 2013

***Real Metrics***

The new Section 503 rule is ground-breaking in that it sets – for the first time ever – targeted hiring goals for individuals with disabilities in the federal contracting workforce. "Good faith efforts" will now be replaced by real metrics.

As any good business leader knows: **what gets measured gets done**.

To that end, the Section 503 rule establishes an aspirational **seven percent utilization goal** for the employment of qualified individuals with disabilities in each job category of a contractor's workforce. For contractors or subcontractors with 50 to 100 employees, the goal can apply to the workforce as a whole. Companies with less than 50 employees are not covered by the affirmative action requirements of Section 503.

This employment goal is similar to the metrics – the affirmative action and reporting obligations – that contractors have long used to promote equal opportunity for women and minorities. By our estimation, if every company subject to this rule were to achieve the seven percent employment goal, nearly 600,000 qualified workers with disabilities would be added to the workforce in just the first year.

Consider that.

And just so we are clear – and because words matter – this is an **aspirational goal**. It is not a **mandatory quota**.

It is neither a floor nor a ceiling. It does not arbitrarily limit or restrict the employment of individuals with disabilities.

Instead, the goal is a management tool that informs decision-making and provides real accountability.

The goal is a means to an end, not an end in and of itself. Failure to meet the goal is not a violation of the regulation and would not lead to a fine, penalty or sanction.

Rather, if the goal is not achieved, contractors will be expected to examine their policies and practices to determine whether and where impediments to equal employment exist, and to develop a plan to address any deficiencies.

***Improving Policies and Practices***

In addition to the goal, the new rule requires contractors to maintain several quantitative measurements and comparisons for the number of individuals with disabilities who apply for jobs and the number they actually hire.

We believe this provision is critical to create greater accountability for employment decisions and practices.

Having this data will enable both employers and OFCCP compliance officers to evaluate the effectiveness of contractors’ outreach and recruitment efforts and to better examine the hiring and selection processes related to individuals with disabilities.

That means, for example, looking at how job postings and position descriptions are written and considering whether or not they inadvertently screen out or discourage otherwise qualified workers with disabilities from applying and being considered for jobs.

For some contractors it might also mean taking a fresh look at what they list as "minimum qualifications" or "essential functions" of a job.

To be sure, **the new rule does not require any employer to hire someone who is not qualified to perform the job in question**.

But I believe that it is completely fair and totally reasonable to ask employers to consider whether or not there are barriers to equal opportunity for people with disabilities in their establishments. If so, we must work together to overcome those barriers.

***Voluntary Self-Identification***

Another major provision of the new Section 503 rules is the requirement that contractors invite job applicants to voluntarily self-identify as individuals with a disability at the **pre-offer** stage of the hiring process. This is in addition to the already existing requirement that contractors invite new hires to voluntarily self-identify **after** receiving a job offer.

Under the new rule, contractors must also invite their employees to voluntarily self-identify on a regular basis. After all, the status of employees may change over time and an invitation to self-identify provides workers with a way to either self-identify for the first time or to change their previously reported status.

We believe that providing workers with multiple opportunities to voluntarily self-identify is a good thing.

When we first proposed these self-identification provisions, I overheard a consultant speaking to a group of federal contractors about them: "Is OFCCP obsessed?" he asked. "They want us to ask our employees if they have a disability when they **apply** for the job, after they **get** the job and again and again while they are **on** the job! Workers are going to think we care!"

I felt like yelling out, "Bingo!"

This is how things change. This is how attitudes shift and how individuals with disabilities become more confident in asking for reasonable accommodations when needed.

This is how employers learn the language of tolerance, acceptance and, ultimately integration. This is how workplaces become more welcoming.

We've seen this before. We saw it with racial integration, when lighter-skinned workers would try to "pass" as white for fear of losing out on opportunities for employment and advancement if they identified as people of color.

I saw it when I started my career as an attorney. Many of my female colleagues worried about employers learning their age, their marital status or whether or not they were planning to start a family.

But as workers feel safer in the workplace, as they better understand their rights under the law and as they feel increasingly confident that those rights will be protected – these sorts of invitations to disclose demographic information or to voluntarily self-identify will be seen as **inclusive**, not **intrusive**... as a means to **promote**, not to **pry**.

Look, I know that there are a lot of human resources professionals who find this to be uncomfortable. Many of them even **think** they are prohibited from asking employees about their disability status.

But, in fact, the EEOC has long held that inviting employees to voluntarily self-identify as people with disabilities does not violate the ADA when it's in furtherance of an employer's affirmative action obligations. And just to underscore that point – since it is so often misunderstood or misrepresented – we've posted on our web site a letter to that effect from EEOC's counsel.

At OFCCP, we believe that providing multiple opportunities for workers to self-identify as individuals with disabilities will increase self-identification rates, improving data collection that is vital to assessing the effectiveness of an employer's affirmative action efforts.

The self-identification provisions go hand-in-hand with achieving the seven percent employment goal established by our new rule. And that is why conferences like this are critical to our work.

**What we need from you is fact-based evidence on both the real and the perceived barriers to voluntary self-identification**.

Throughout this rule-making process, I have heard from numerous individuals, advocates and leaders in the disability community who tell me that they want these invitations to self-identify, that they welcome the question when it is genuinely intended to increase their opportunities in the workforce.

But as I said from the start, "good data is the cornerstone of good public policy." What we need from you is data.

How can employers ask the question? How can they put it in the right context? What steps will they need to take to achieve the intended result?

To put it another way, what is the state-of-the science on this issue and how can we expand the field of understanding about what it will take to improve a worker's willingness to self-identify as a person with a disability?

The answers to these questions are critical from the perspectives of both employers and workers. And I believe they provide the key to the success of our new rule.

Source: OFCCP Shiu Remarks at Cornell Conference

**REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION (DISABILITY) REQUEST FORM**

**This form and all medical information must be kept confidential.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **APPLICANT/EMPLOYEE INFORMATION** | | | | | |
| **Name** | | | | | **□ Job Applicant □ Current Employee** |
| **Address** | | | | | **Phone Number** |
| **EMPLOYEE INFORMATION (Complete this section if you are an employee even if you are currently on leave)** | | | | | |
| **Title** | | **Office Title** | | | |
| **Office Telephone Number** | **Division** | | | **Supervisor** | |
| **Location** | | | | | |
| **APPLICANT INFORMATION (Complete this section only if you are a job applicant)** | | | | | |
| **Position /Title Applied for** | | | **Division/Unit (if known)** | | |
| **Location of Position (if known)** | | | | | |
| **Part(s) of employment process for which an accommodation is requested**  □ Job Application Job Requisition Number (if known): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  □ Assessment Tool Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  □ Interview Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  □ Appointment  □ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | | | | |
| **Organization Contact Person (if known)** | | | | | **Phone Number** |
| **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION REQUESTED:** | | | | | |
| **Identify the limitation, which requires accommodation. Be specific: E.G., “May not lift over 25 pounds for six months.” (Attach an additional sheet of paper, if necessary.)** | | | | | |
| **Is your disability** □ On going □ Temporary □ Unknown  If temporary, Anticipated Date RA no longer needed: | | | | | |
| **Describe the nature of reasonable accommodation requested** (Attach additional sheets and present supporting documentation as appropriate) | | | | | |
| **If equipment is requested, please specify brand, model number and vendor, if known.** | | | | | |
| **Specify how the accommodation will assist you perform the essential functions of the position held or desired. (Attach an additional sheet of paper if necessary.)** | | | | | |
| **Verification by a health professional for your reasonable Accommodation must meet the following criteria:**   * 1. Documentation must provide a diagnosis of disability and include a medical recommendation for a specific reasonable accommodation.   2. The documentation must be written on the official letterhead or other organizational form of the qualified health professional or reasonable accommodation subject matter expert.   3. The health professional’s credentials must be identified.   4. The documentation must be dated and signed.   5. Describe the limitations in detail as they currently exist and only in relationship to the job, and state whether the disability is on going or temporary. If temporary, specify the date the disability is expected to no longer require an accommodation.   6. Indicate the extent to which the accommodation will permit the employee to perform the essential functions of the job.   7. If equipment purchase is recommended, please be specific. If work modification is recommended, or restructuring or sharing of specific duties, describe the recommended action, please be specific.   **Note: You are responsible for any expense incurred in providing RA documentation.** | | | | | |

I certify that I have read the above request, that it is true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief, and that I have read the attached notices concerning my right to file a complaint with federal, state and local civil rights enforcement agencies.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date Candidate’s/Employee’s Signature

**REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION (DISABILITY) REQUEST**

**RECORD OF ACTION**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***FOR USE BY HR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS COORDINATOR*** | | | |
| **Name of Applicant/Employee:** | | | **Telephone Number** |
| **Address:** | | | |
| **Request Number** | | | **Received by:** |
| **Date Received:** | | | **Time Received:** |
| **Method of Notifying**  In Person □ Phone □ Mail □ E-mail | | | |
| **DOCUMENTATION OF STEPS TAKEN TO CONSIDER REQUEST** | | | |
| **DATE** | **COMMENTS** | | |
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| **RESOLUTION** | | | |
| **□ Granted**  Date: | | Type of Accommodation Granted: □ As requested □ Different from what was requested  Give specifics: | |
| **□ Denied**  Date: | | Reason for Denial: | |
|  | |  | |
| **Date when letter granting or denying the requested accommodation was sent:** | | | |
| **FOLLOW UP** | | | |
| Request Granted:  Follow up with requestor after implementation if accommodation provided is satisfactory: □ Yes □ No  Date of follow up**:** | | | |

**Organization Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

|  |
| --- |
| **AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF MEDICAL INFORMATION** |

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(First Name) (Middle Initial) Last Name

(Address – Number, Street, City, State and Zip Code)

Do hereby authorize:

(Name of person releasing information)

(Organization releasing information)

(Address – Number, Street, City, State and Zip Code)

To release to [ORGANIZATION] medical information pertinent to the reasonable accommodation requested in the attached document.

**To any licensed physician, other licensed practitioner, Reasonable Accommodation Subject Matter Expert, hospital, clinic, or other medically related facility or United States Veteran Administration:** I authorize you to release to [ORGANIZATION] medical information to be used solely for the purpose of evaluating my request for a reasonable accommodation. This authorization shall be valid for a period of 90 days after the date of my signature or earlier if revoked by me in writing to [ORGANIZATION]. I hereby acknowledge that I have been informed of my right to receive a copy of this authorization request. I further acknowledge that I have been informed that if the medical information contained herein is not released, my reasonable accommodation may be denied.

Printed Name Employee Signature

Date

**REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION EVALUATION**

**AND ESSENTIAL JOB DUTIES DISCLOSURE FORM**

**Instructions**

This form should be completed for all open positions. Copies of the completed form will be provided at the time of the interview to all candidates, both internal and external. Please provide this explanation to all candidates:

*“As part of our effort to provide reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities, we share this essential job information with all candidates who apply for open positions. If you become the final candidate chosen for this position, we will provide you with an opportunity to request any reasonable accommodations you might need at the time an offer is made.”*

**Guidance for Hiring Managers**

When extending job offers, ask the new employees-to-be whether or not [ORGANIZATION] can provide them with any reasonable accommodations. If they decline, encourage them to ask you (as the hiring manager) or their HR representative for such an accommodation if they ever need one in the future. Have them sign the form acknowledging they have had an opportunity to discuss this matter with you, and give the signed form to your RAC.

If the candidate or employee requests an accommodation, record the details of the request separately on the Reasonable Accommodation Request Form.

If you and the candidate are not sure what, if any, accommodations might be needed, consult with the RAC for advice and resources.

**REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION EVALUATION FORM**  
Job duties Information for informing the reasonable accommodation process

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Job Title: | Requisition Number: |
| HR Contact: | Telephone: |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **ESSENTIAL JOB ACTIVITIES** |
| 1. **TRAVEL** (Check each that applies) **FACTORS** (Please circle as appropriate. See instruction sheet for definitions)  **Importance** **Time Spent**  Intercampus 3 2 1 0 3 2 1 0   Offsite – Local 3 2 1 0 3 2 1 0  US/Domestic 3 2 1 0 3 2 1 0  International 3 2 1 0 3 2 1 0 2. **Meetings** (Check each that applies)   **Importance** **Time Spent**  Same Building 3 2 1 0 3 2 1 0   Campus 3 2 1 0 3 2 1 0  Offsite – Local 3 2 1 0 3 2 1 0  US/Domestic 3 2 1 0 3 2 1 0  International 3 2 1 0 3 2 1 0 3. **Equipment/Lifting** (Please note percentage of time equipment is used as part of job)   **Heavy 100% Moderate 50% Light 25% None 0%** Computer 3 2 1 0 Telephone 3 2 1 0 Fax 3 2 1 0 Lifting (\_\_\_\_\_\_ lbs.) 3 2 1 0   Comments \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

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| 1. **JOB SITE INFORMATION** |
| 1. **WHEELCHAIR ACCESSBILITY** (Please check one)  Wheelchair Accessible Not Currently Wheelchair Accessible Restroom Building Entrance Cafeteria Office Space Other   Comments: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   1. ON-SITE REQUIREMENTS (This job requires the incumbent to be on site.)  40 + hours Part-Time available, # of hours  Flex-time available (start/end times for work day) Telecommuting available  Other (Please explain) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. SUPPORT STAFF/SERVICES AVAILABLE (Please indicate availability for this job)  Full Time Part-Time Not Available Admin Clerical Support 3 2 1 Shuttle Van 3 2 1 (lift equipped van available in):   Comments: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **TO BE COMPLETED AT TIME OF HIRE** | | |
| New Hire Employee Name (please print): | New Hire: Employee Signature: | |
| Date of Hire: | Hiring Manager: | |
| Reasonable Accommodation Requested: Yes No | | HR Manager: |
| If yes, attach separate sheet(s) summarizing accommodations requested | | |

Note: [ORGANIZATION keeps a copy and gives and one to the candidate.

**SAMPLE PERSONS WITH DISABILITY SELF-IDENTITY ENCOURAGEMENT**

**[ORGANIZATION] is committed to fully including people with disabilities.**

**In an effort to enhance our inclusion efforts, we invite our employees to voluntarily self-identify whether they are a person with a disability by including this information in the confidential database managed by our Human Resources department.**

**At [ORGANIZATION], we believe that by better understanding our employees who have disabilities—whether or not the disability is apparent—we can seize opportunities to provide greater services to our customers. We value the diverse perspectives of our employees with disabilities and continually look for more ways to enable them to contribute to our business goals.**

People who have a disability are one of the largest and most diverse populations. In the United States, there are an estimated 54 million people who have a condition that significantly affects one or more of their major life activities. People with disabilities are found in every type of job and profession and are represented at all socioeconomic levels.

[ORGANIZATION] understands that many people who have a disability, even one that is visible, may choose not to disclose this information. Research by Cornell University has shown that there is generally a fear of being treated differently and having limitations placed on future career opportunities. Those with non-apparent or “hidden” disabilities (e.g., hearing loss, depression, anxiety, dyslexia, traumatic brain injury, heart condition) also share this concern. Please know that in asking you to self-identify, we are not requesting details regarding your diagnosis or any other confidential medical information. We simply want to know what percentage of our workforce has a disability so we can strengthen our inclusion strategies and make it easier for colleagues with disabilities to request any needed accommodations or other forms of support.

At [ORGANIZATION], we strive to foster a safe environment for employees to self-disclose their disability status. We honor and respect people with disabilities and the value that diverse perspectives and contributions can make to our business goals every day. *We are working to diversify our workforce even more, support all employees in reaching their full potential, and assess whether efforts to recruit and retain individuals with disabilities are proving successful.*

If you have an apparent or non-apparent disability, we invite you to self-identify this information so that we might better understand our workforce and continue investing in ways to foster full inclusion and empowerment for all employees at [ORGANIZATION].

Instructions for Choosing Your Status:

Please go to our confidential site at [LINK], where you will have an opportunity to self-identify your ability status. Once you have entered the information, it will be included as part of your confidential personal information, along with your marital status, dependents, home address, and other information already in the [ORGANIZATION] HR system.

If you have questions about the self-identification process, or would like to discuss the definitions of what constitutes a disability in a confidential setting, please contact [NAME].