



**Job Accommodation Network**

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

## Accommodation and Compliance Series

### Accommodation and Compliance Series: Deafness

Job Accommodation Network  
PO Box 6080  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080  
(800)526-7234 (V)  
(877)781-9403 (TTY)  
[jan@askjan.org](mailto:jan@askjan.org)  
[AskJAN.org](http://AskJAN.org)



Funded by a contract with the Office of Disability  
Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor

## Preface

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is funded by a grant from the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor. JAN makes documents available with the understanding that the information be used solely for educational purposes. The information is not intended to be legal or medical advice. If legal or medical advice is needed, appropriate legal or medical services should be contacted.

JAN does not endorse or recommend any products or services mentioned in this publication. Although every effort is made to update resources, JAN encourages contacting product manufacturers/vendors and service providers directly to ensure that they meet the intended purposes. This guarantees that the most up-to-date information is obtained.

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Updated 02/16/2024.

## **JAN'S Accommodation and Compliance Series**

### **Introduction**

JAN's Accommodation and Compliance Series is designed to help employers determine effective accommodations and comply with Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each publication in the series addresses a specific medical condition and provides information about the condition, ADA information, accommodation ideas, and resources for additional information.

The Accommodation and Compliance Series is a starting point in the accommodation process and may not address every situation. Accommodations should be made on a case by case basis, considering each employee's individual limitations and accommodation needs. Employers are encouraged to contact JAN to discuss specific situations in more detail.

For information on assistive technology and other accommodation ideas, visit JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) at <https://AskJAN.org/soar>.

### **Information about Deafness**

It is estimated that there are more than 28 million Americans who are deaf or hard of hearing. Hearing loss is the reduced ability to hear sound and may develop for various reasons. An individual may have a congenital loss from childhood or an adult illness that can result in total loss of hearing. The effects of aging, acute injury, or progressive loss over time due to excessive or prolonged exposure to noise may also result in deafness for some people. Individuals who are deaf may require accommodations to enable successful performance of essential job functions. Accommodations will not always be necessary, nor will they always be effective.

### **Deafness and the Americans with Disabilities Act**

The ADA does not contain a definitive list of medical conditions that constitute disabilities. Instead, the ADA defines a person with a disability as someone who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more "major life activities," (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. For more information about how to determine whether a person has a disability under the ADA, see [How to Determine Whether a Person Has a Disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act \(ADAAA\)](#).

## **Accommodating Employees with Deafness**

People who are deaf may develop some of the limitations discussed below, but seldom develop all of them. Also, the degree of limitation will vary among individuals. Be aware that not all people who are deaf will need accommodations to perform their jobs and many others may only need a few accommodations. The following is only a sample of the possibilities available. Numerous other accommodation solutions may exist.

### **Questions to Consider:**

1. What limitations is the employee experiencing?
2. How do these limitations affect the employee and the employee's job performance?
3. What specific job tasks are problematic as a result of these limitations?
4. What accommodations are available to reduce or eliminate these problems? Are all possible resources being used to determine possible accommodations?
5. Once accommodations are in place, would it be useful to meet with the employee to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations and to determine whether additional accommodations are needed?
6. Do supervisory personnel and employees need training?

### **Accommodation Ideas:**

#### **Limitations**

##### **Deaf - One Ear**

- Apps for Individuals Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- CART Services
- CART Services - Remote
- Communicate Another Way
- Communication Access Technologies
- Cyclist's Mirror
- Industrial Mirrors
- Instant Messaging and Texting Solutions for Businesses
- Interpreter
- Masks - Clear

- Notepad or White Board
- Paging Products & Services
- Real-time and Off-line Captioning Services
- Strobe Lights
- TTY - Portable
- TTY Software
- TTYs (Text Telephones)
- Video Relay Services (VRS)
- Video Remote Interpreting Services (VRI)

#### Deaf - Total

- Apps for Individuals Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- CART Services
- CART Services - Remote
- Communicate Another Way
- Communication Access Technologies
- Cyclist's Mirror
- Industrial Mirrors
- Instant Messaging and Texting Solutions for Businesses
- Interpreter
- Large Visual Display for TTY
- Masks - Clear
- Notepad or White Board
- Paging Products & Services
- Real-time and Off-line Captioning Services
- Strobe Lights
- Telephone Flasher
- TTY - Portable
- TTY Software
- TTYs (Text Telephones)
- Video Relay Services (VRS)
- Video Remote Interpreting Services (VRI)

## **Work-Related Functions**

### **Communicate**

- Equipment
  - Accessible Telephones
  - Bluetooth Products
  - Bone Conduction Technology
  - Captioned Telephone Calls
  - Cellular Telephone Technology: Deaf & Hard of Hearing
  - Communication Access Technologies
  - Headsets - Computer (USB, VOIP etc.)
  - Headsets - Hearing Aid Compatible, Amplification
  - Hearing Carry Over (HCO) TTYs
  - Neckloops
  - Speech Recognition Software
  - Telecoil Compatible Headsets
  - Telephone Amplification
  - TTYs (Text Telephones)
  - Voice-Carry-Over (VCO) Telephones
- Face-to-Face
  - Assistive Listening Devices (personal)
  - Assistive Listening Devices and Sound Field System
  - Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Device
  - CART Services - Remote
  - CART Services
  - Interpreter
  - Video Relay Services (VRS)
  - Video Remote Interpreting Services (VRI)
- Other
  - Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
  - Aide/Assistant/Attendant
  - Scribe/Notetaker

- Service Animal
- Word Prediction/Completion and Macro Software
- Writing/Editing Software

#### Operate Equipment/Vehicles

- Alerting Devices
- Established Routes of Travel for Heavy Equipment/Vehicles
- Strobe Lights
- Vehicle Rear Vision System

#### Safety Standards

- Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
- Alerting Devices
- Established Routes of Travel for Heavy Equipment/Vehicles
- Fall Protection
- Hearing Protection
- Personal Safety and Fall Alert Devices
- Plan of Action
- Strobe Lights
- Vehicle Rear Vision System

## **Situations and Solutions:**

The following situations and solutions are real-life examples of accommodations that were made by JAN customers. Because accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis, these examples may not be effective for every workplace but give you an idea about the types of accommodations that are possible.

### **A meat processor who was deaf was promoted to a position working in a busy warehouse.**

The individual needed to communicate with several lead processors throughout the workday. The facility provided handheld text messaging devices for all lead processors.

### **A field geologist who was deaf and worked alone in remote areas was unable to use two-way radio communication to report his findings.**

Text telephone technology was used to allow the geologist to communicate using a cellular telephone.

### **A government employee who was deaf was not communicating effectively with coworkers.**

The employer provided video relay interpreting equipment and service access. According to the employer, the accommodation improved communication.

### **A medical technician who was deaf could not hear the buzz of a timer, which was necessary for specific laboratory tests.**

An indicator light was attached to the equipment.

### **A municipality recently hired a code inspector who is deaf.**

The city decided to provide an interpreter for training and a cell phone with texting to use when working in the field. The inspector was able to inspect buildings and enforce the building codes with these accommodations.

### **Interested in hiring a candidate who was deaf, a bank manager called JAN for assistance.**

The position required conversations with hearing customers. JAN suggested communication access technology that enables two people to type to each other while facing each other. Using the equipment, the teller and customer would be able to type their conversation, both viewing the text on a personal screen. This technology would also enable bank customers who are deaf or hard of hearing to access banking services.

### **A phlebotomist who is deaf was provided a text to speech device to communicate with patients.**

He was also given a vibrating pager with visual display so he could be contacted while in remote locations of the hospital.

### **A state employer had several employees who were deaf or hard of hearing.**

These employees needed to respond to emergency signals and communicate in emergency. Each employee was provided with a vibrating pager that was connected to



the alarm system. When the alarm sounded they were paged. Laminated note cards with communication options and flashlights to assist with signs or lip reading were also provided.

## **Products**

There are numerous products that can be used to accommodate people with limitations. JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource at <https://AskJAN.org/soar> is designed to let users explore various accommodation options. Many product vendor lists are accessible through this system; however, JAN provides these lists and many more that are not available on the Web site upon request. Contact JAN directly if you have specific accommodation situations, are looking for products, need vendor information, or are seeking a referral.

## Resources

### **Job Accommodation Network**

West Virginia University  
PO Box 6080  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080  
Toll Free: (800) 526-7234  
TTY: (304) 293-7186  
Fax: (304) 293-5407  
[jan@askjan.org](mailto:jan@askjan.org)  
<https://askjan.org>

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the employability of people with disabilities.

### **Office of Disability Employment Policy**

200 Constitution Avenue,  
NW, Room S-1303  
Washington, DC 20210  
Toll Free: (866) 633-7365  
[odep@dol.gov](mailto:odep@dol.gov)  
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep>

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Labor. ODEP provides national leadership to increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities while striving to eliminate barriers to employment.

### **American Academy of Audiology**

11480 Commerce Park Drive  
Suite 220  
Reston, VA 20191  
Toll Free: (800) 222-2336  
Fax: (703) 476-5157  
[infoaud@audiology.org](mailto:infoaud@audiology.org)  
<http://www.audiology.org>

The American Academy of Audiology promotes quality hearing and balance care by advancing the profession of audiology through leadership, advocacy, education, public awareness, and support of research.

**American Cochlear Implant Alliance**

P.O. Box 103

McLEAN, VA 22101-0103

Direct: (703) 534-6146

[info@acialliance.org](mailto:info@acialliance.org)

<http://www.acialliance.org/>

The American Cochlear Implant Alliance is a not-for-profit membership organization created with the purpose of eliminating barriers to cochlear implantation by sponsoring research, driving heightened awareness and advocating for improved access to cochlear implants for patients of all ages across the US. ACI Alliance members are clinicians, scientists, educators, and others on cochlear implant teams as well as parent and consumer advocates. An annual meeting for professional members is convened.

**American Hearing Research Foundation**

8 South Michigan Avenue, Suite #814

Chicago, IL 60603-4539

Direct: (312) 726-9670

Fax: (312) 726-9695

[lkoch@american-hearing.org](mailto:lkoch@american-hearing.org)

<http://www.american-hearing.org>

To promote, conduct, and furnish financial assistance for medical research into the causes, prevention, and cure of deafness, impaired hearing, and balance disorders; encourage the collaboration of clinical and laboratory research; encourage and improve teaching in the medical aspect of hearing problems; and disseminate the latest and most reliable scientific knowledge to physicians, hearing professionals, and the public.

**Association of Late Deafened Adults**

8038 MacIntosh Lane  
Rockford, IL 61107  
Direct: (815) 332-1515  
[info@alda.org](mailto:info@alda.org)  
<http://www.alda.org/>

A resource center providing information and referrals, self-help, and support groups for people deafened as adults.

Their mission is to support the empowerment of deafened people.

**Association of Medical Professionals with Hearing Losses**

<https://amphl.org/>

We provide information, promote advocacy and mentorship, and create a network for individuals with hearing loss interested in or working in health care fields.

**Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center (GARD)**

P.O. Box 8126  
Gaithersburg, MD 20898-8126  
Toll Free: (888) 205-2311  
Fax: (301) 251-4911  
<https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/>

The Genetic and Rare Diseases (GARD) Information Center is a program of the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) and funded by two parts of the National Institutes of Health (NIH): NCATS and the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI). GARD provides the public with access to current, reliable, and easy to understand information about rare or genetic diseases in English or Spanish.

**Hearing Health Foundation**

363 Seventh Avenue,  
10th Floor  
New York, NY 10001-3904  
Toll Free: (866) 454-3924  
Direct: (212) 257-6140  
[info@hearinghealthfoundation.org](mailto:info@hearinghealthfoundation.org)  
<http://hearinghealthfoundation.org>

**Our Mission:**

To prevent and cure hearing loss and tinnitus through groundbreaking research and to promote hearing health.

**Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults**

141 Middle Neck Road  
Sands Point, NY 11050  
Direct: (516) 944-8900  
[hkncinfo@hknc.org](mailto:hkncinfo@hknc.org)  
<https://www.helenkeller.org/hknc>

The mission of the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults is to enable each person who is deaf-blind to live and work in his or her community of choice.

**MedlinePlus**

8600 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, MD 20894  
[custserv@nlm.nih.gov](mailto:custserv@nlm.nih.gov)  
<https://medlineplus.gov>

MedlinePlus is the National Institutes of Health's Web site for patients and their families and friends. Produced by the National Library of Medicine, the world's largest medical library, it brings you information about diseases, conditions, and wellness issues in language you can understand. MedlinePlus offers reliable, up-to-date health information, anytime, anywhere, for free.

**National Association of the Deaf**

8630 Fenton Street, Suite 820  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3819  
Direct: (301) 587-1788  
Fax: (301) 587-1791  
<http://nad.org/>

The mission of the National Association of the Deaf is to preserve, protect and promote the civil, human and linguistic rights of deaf and hard of hearing people in the United States of America.

**National Center for Biotechnology Information**

8600 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, MD 20894  
[pubmedcentral@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](mailto:pubmedcentral@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>

The National Center for Biotechnology Information advances science and health by providing access to biomedical and genomic information.

**National Cued Speech Association**

1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Suite 190-713  
Washington, DC 20004  
Toll Free: (800) 459-3529  
[info@cuedspeech.org](mailto:info@cuedspeech.org)  
<http://www.cuedspeech.org/>

The National Cued Speech Association supports effective communication, language development (international languages) and literacy in families with deaf, hard of hearing or learning disabled infants, children and youth through the use of Cued Speech

**National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders**

31 Center Drive

MSC 2320

Bethesda, MD 20892

Toll Free: (800) 241-1044

[nidcdinfo@nidcd.nih.gov](mailto:nidcdinfo@nidcd.nih.gov)

<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

National Resource center for health information about hearing, balance, smell, taste, voice, speech, and language for health professionals, patients, industry, and the public.

This document was developed by the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (#OD-38028-22-75-4-54). The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Labor. Nor does mention of tradenames, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Labor.