

## Practical Tips for Applying for a Job and Obtaining Reasonable Accommodations

### Job Application and Interview Process

- You do not have to disclose that you have a disability during the interview process. This is a personal choice and whether it makes sense to do so, will vary upon the circumstances and the job position for which you are applying. However, as a general rule, individuals would be advised to not disclose their disability until they have received a job offer, so as to protect themselves against discrimination in the employer's decision making process
- If you are in need of accommodations during the interview process (e.g., if you are required to take a written exam) or are appearing for an interview in person, it would be prudent to disclose the existence of your disability, in order that the prospective employer is fully aware of what accommodations you might need during the application/interview process
- In almost all circumstances, you may not be required to disclose your underlying medical condition or should you disclose the underlying nature of your medical condition. The confidentiality of your medical diagnoses/conditions is protected by law.

### Tips for Negotiating for And Obtaining Reasonable Accommodations

- If provided to you, review a copy of the employer's job description for your position and make note of what tasks/responsibilities are identified as "essential job duties."
- Identify for which job duties you may need some sort of accommodation. If you can easily identify what accommodation(s) you may need to perform a specified job duty, make note of that. If you are unsure of what resources/equipment may be helpful in enabling you to perform a specific job duty, speak with a vocational rehabilitation counselor to discuss what resources/equipment may be helpful before making a request for accommodation with respect to that job function/duty.
- Meet with your vocational rehabilitation counselor before making a request to your employer for a reasonable accommodation. He/she may have additional helpful insight on whether the accommodation is reasonable or if there are better
- accommodations that may be available.
- Initiate the reasonable accommodation "interactive process" by sending a **written request** to your employer for your identified accommodations.
- If you believe it would be helpful, ask that an advocate (union representative, vocational rehabilitation counselor, technology consultant, etc.) be allowed to attend the meeting to discuss the requested accommodations
- You do not need to be able to identify the specific equipment/training/accommodation you need in order to be able to perform each essential job duty. The ADA requires the employee and employer to engage in an interactive process to determine what accommodations may be required to allow you to complete your essential job duties.
- If your employer denies your request for accommodation, that is not the end of the process. The employer is required to work with you to identify other possible accommodations
- Keep a record of your requests and your employer's responses to your requests and the dates of each.

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