

Quick Tips: Interviewing People with Disabilities

Fair hiring laws were enacted to give every candidate a fair chance in the interview and selection process. Yet more than 30 years after the American with Disabilities Act became law, recruiters and managers are still uncertain about what they can and cannot ask in an interview session. The key to increasing knowledge and awareness around this critical issue is training, education and information sharing in promoting consistent interview processes and selection practices.

DO

Do ask job-related questions, such as:

- These are the essential functions of the job as explained in the job description. Tell me more about how you would perform these functions with or without an accommodation.

Do state the organization's attendance requirements and ask if the applicant can meet them.

Do focus on the candidate's skills, abilities, and qualifications to do the job. Ask yourself - are the interview questions relevant to the job?

Do wait until the candidate requests or mentions an accommodation before discussing this topic (it is the candidate's responsibility to make the request for accommodation). Ask them to describe how the accommodation they've requested will assist them in accomplishing tasks.

Do conduct the interview:

- In a manner that emphasizes abilities, achievements and individual qualities.
- So that the individual with the disability can explain how he/she would perform the job with or without a reasonable accommodation.
- As you would with any other candidate applying for the open position.

DON'T

Don't ask questions about the disability, such as:

- Can you tell me about your disability?
- How will you get to work?
- What sort of treatment do you need?
- Do you have a mental or physical condition that would preclude you from qualifying for this position?

Don't ask about the amount or type of leave they expect to take to get treatment for their condition.

Don't focus on the candidate's disability.

Don't ask questions about accommodations, such as:

- Will you need accommodations?
- What kind of accommodations will you need?
- How much will that accommodation cost?

Don't try to imagine how you would perform the job with the disability. People with disabilities make adjustments to perform tasks that others may imagine to be difficult or impossible.