

Youth Leadership

Reasonable Accommodation at Work

Under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), if you have a disability and are qualified to do a job, the ADA protects you from job discrimination on the basis of your disability. Under the ADA, you have a disability if you have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.

To be protected under the ADA, you must have a substantial, as opposed to a minor, impairment. A substantial impairment is one that significantly limits or restricts a major life activity such as hearing, seeing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, caring for oneself, learning or working.

If you have a disability, you must also be qualified to perform the essential functions or duties of a job, with or without reasonable accommodation, in order to be protected from job discrimination by the ADA. This means two things. First, you must satisfy the employer's requirements for the job, such as education, employment experience, skills or licenses. Second, you must be able to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation. Essential functions are the fundamental job duties that you must be able to perform on your own or with the help of a reasonable accommodation. An employer cannot refuse to hire you because your disability prevents you from performing duties that are not essential to the job. Remember, you must disclose your disability in order to receive reasonable accommodation.

What is Reasonable Accommodation?

Reasonable accommodation is any change or adjustment to a job or work environment that permits a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the job application process, to perform the essential functions of a job, or to enjoy benefits and privileges of employment equal to those enjoyed by employees without disabilities. For example, reasonable accommodation may include: providing or modifying equipment or devices, job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules, adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, or policies, providing readers and interpreters, and making the workplace readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities.

Adapted from the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission,
<https://www.eeoc.gov/facts/ada18.html>

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