The Technology Landscape for Applicants and Employees who are Blind or Experiencing Vision Loss

Session Begins 1:00 pm CT/ 2pm ET
Periodic Audio Testing Occurring

Real-Time Captioning and the PowerPoint Presentation are available through the Webinar Platform. Options to connect via phone were available in the reminder email.

Presenters

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Agenda

• Statistics about Blindness
• The ADA and Applicants/Employees
• Accommodations: Assistive Technology and Adaptive Techniques
• Questions
Statistics about Blindness

- 6.9 million 2017 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)
- April of 2017
  People with vision loss ages 16-64
  39 percent labor force participation rate
  10 percent unemployment rate
  General working-age population
  73 percent Labor force participation rate
  4% unemployment rate

The ADA and Employees/Applicants

Purpose of the ADA

- Eliminate discrimination based on disability
- Expand integration of people with disabilities into the community
Who is Covered?

• Individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities
• Individuals who have a record of such an impairment
• Individuals who are regarded as having such an impairment

Blindness as a Disability

• Persons that are blind should easily be found to have a disability within the first prong of the definition
• i.e. Substantially limited in major life activity of seeing
• Persons experiencing vision loss or have a visual impairment meet definition if...
• substantially limited in seeing or another major life activity (e.g., the major bodily function of special sense organs)

Mitigating measures

• Determination of disability must ignore the positive effects of any mitigating measures, i.e.
• Use of low vision devices
• Use of learned behavioral modifications
Who is an Employer?
• Anyone who employs 15 or more employees full or part time
• Unions or collective bargaining entities
• Government entities (state and local) who employ one or more individuals
• Temporary Employment agencies

What is Covered?
• Recruitment
• Application Process
• Interview
• Examinations for employment (medical/agility/personality, etc.)
• Pay
• Training
• Benefits of Employment
• Promotion
• Layoff/firing

“Qualified”
• Able to perform the essential functions with or without reasonable accommodation
• Meets the requisite skill and qualification standards
Qualification Standards

• Must be job related and consistent with business necessity

• May not discriminate on the basis of disability

• Limiting, segregating and classifying on the basis of disability is unlawful

Pre-Employment

Disability and Medical Related Questions

Employers may not ask disability related or medical questions on application/during interview such as:

• Whether she has ever had any medical procedures related to her vision (for example, whether the applicant ever had eye surgery)

• Whether she uses any prescription medications, including medications for conditions related to the eye; or

• Whether she has any condition that may have caused a vision impairment (for example, whether the applicant has diabetes)

• Employers may not ask about the need for an accommodation on application/during interview
Pre-Employment Questions Regarding Reasonable Accommodation

- When employer observes something during the interview which they reasonably believe will require accommodation
- When interviewee discloses need for an accommodation during the interview process
- When interviewee discloses a disability that the employer believes will require accommodation during the interview process

Accommodations: Assistive Technology and Adaptive Techniques

Accommodations for the Application Process
Accommodation Examples

• an accessible job application/website
• Qualified Reader
• written materials in an accessible format, such as in large print, Braille, in a recorded format, or on a computer disk
• Screen Reading Software
• modification of an employment test

Post-Employment

• Inquiry necessary to determine whether or not someone meets the definition of disability for “accommodation” purposes

continues...

• Responsibility for requesting an accommodation rests with the employee or applicant

• Employers are not required to “second guess” someone’s need for an accommodation.
Reasonable Accommodation

Modification or adjustment to a job, the work environment, or the way things usually are done.

Continues...

• An employer is not required to provide an accommodation that is primarily for personal use.

• ADA requirements do not prevent an employer from providing accommodation beyond what is required by the ADA.

Forms of Reasonable Accommodation

• Making existing facilities accessible
• Job restructuring
• Part-time or modified work schedules
• Acquiring or modifying equipment
• Changing tests, training materials, or policies
• Providing qualified readers or interpreters
• Reassignment to a vacant position
Accommodation Examples

- assistive technology, including:
  - a closed circuit television system (CCTV) for reading printed materials
  - an external computer screen magnifier
  - a Braille embosser
  - digital recorders
  - Screen Reading Software and Training
  - an optical scanner that can create documents in electronic form from printed ones
  - a refreshable Braille display
  - Computer Phone Software
  - Aps

Stand Magnifier and Braille Embosser

Computer Screen Magnifier and Duxbury Braille Translation Software
Accommodation Examples Continued

- Qualified Reader
- written materials in an accessible format, such as in large print, Braille, in a recorded format, or on a computer disk
- modification of employer policies to allow use of a guide dog in the workplace
- modification of an employment test
- a driver or payment for the cost of transportation to enable performance of essential functions
- an accessible website
- Headsets - Computer (USB, VOIP etc.)
- permission to work at home
- modified training or training in the use of assistive technology
- Braille Labelers
Reasonable Accommodation Does Not Include

• Elimination of an essential function
• Lowering production standards
• Provision of personal use items
• Provision of "light duty" position

Undue Hardship

• Financial Hardship
• use of tax benefits
• Size of Company (including other offices/branches)
• Administrative Hardship
• Alters the nature of the job or activity

Resources

• ADA National Network
• (800) 949-4232
• wwwadata.org
• Blindness Related Resources
• (posted with session handouts)
Questions?

Contact Information

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Next Session
The ADA, Addiction, Recovery and Employment Workshop
June 16, 2020, 2-3:30 ET.
Register online at http://www.ada-audio.org
or Call (877) 232-1990