



This training is developed and delivered in collaboration with the [Massachusetts Disability Law Center](#).

An In-Depth Exploration of Reasonable Accommodations and the Interactive Process

Tips/Best Practices

An accommodation is **any reasonable change** in the work environment or in the way things are customarily done that enables an individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of their job and to enjoy equal employment opportunities.

- There are no limits to what **may** be considered a reasonable accommodation.
- Employees **and** job applicants are entitled to reasonable accommodations.
- Requests may be made by the individual or someone authorized to act on their behalf.
- Requests do not have to be made in writing, on any particular forms, or in a way that uses any particular terminology.

The interactive process should result in agreement on an accommodation which is **effective**.

- An effective accommodation may be different from the accommodation that the employee first requested.
- Engage in the interactive process in **good faith**.
- Consider accommodations the individual may need to be able to effectively engage in the interactive process.
- Limit involvement in the interactive process to **trained** human resources personnel and, if necessary, a direct manager or immediate supervisor.
- Employers should strongly consider the preference of the individual being accommodated in choosing between two or more possible effective accommodations.

Medical documentation may be required to support an accommodation request.

- If the disability and need for the accommodation are obvious, do not ask.
- If you do request medical support, it should be limited to the identified disability and its nexus to the accommodation requested.
- Do not ask for an open-ended medical release from the individual.
- Support can come from **any** medical professional who is knowledgeable about the individual's health condition and need for the accommodation.

Document the interactive process and any agreed-upon accommodation(s).

- Keep such documentation separate from the employee's personnel file.
- Share information regarding an employee's reasonable accommodation only with individuals who have a need to know, i.e. direct supervisors, department managers, etc.
- Consider a trial accommodation period and be open to any adjustments that may be necessary following further consultation with the employee.
- Regularly maintain/replace any equipment that is necessary for the accommodation.

Resource Links

- [E.E.O.C.: Enforcement Guidance on Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship Under the ADA](#)
- [ADA Title I and V Law](#)
- [It's Good for Business: US Department of Labor announces report finding nearly half of accommodations for disabled workers have no cost](#)
- [Applying Performance and Conduct Standards to Employees with Disabilities](#)
- [Job Accommodations Network \(JAN\)](#)



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