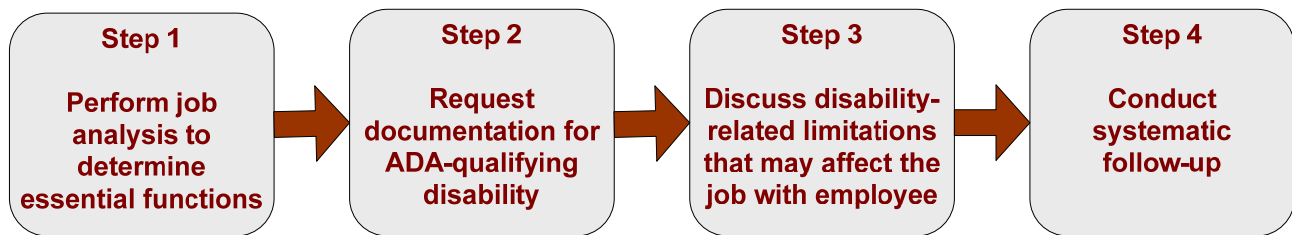


CONDUCTING A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION INTERVIEW

The Reasonable Accommodation Interview

One of the employment requirements of the ADA is to have an interactive discussion with an employee who is requesting reasonable accommodation¹. Please consider utilizing the suggested guidance for reasonable accommodation interviews.



The Reasonable Accommodation Interview (RAI) is designed to provide an equal employment opportunity for an employee with a disability. It also gives the employer a chance to fairly and accurately assess the impact of an employee's disability on the performance of the essential functions of his or her job. It is *assumed* that the employer has accurately assessed the essential functions of an employee's job prior to the RAI.

The dynamics of this interview are similar to a job interview. Performance problems should not be discussed in the RAI because the dynamics of a RAI are not punitive or reward-based but are fact-finding, problem-resolution based.

Step 1: Ensure That a Job Analysis Has Been Performed to Determine the Essential Functions

1. Review the employer's job analysis process	
a. An ADA-compliant job analysis process has been performed.	
1. The essential job tasks identified include quantity and quality requirements.	
2. The behavioral requirements of the job have been stated in measurable terms.	
2. Review the employee's job description	
The essential functions of the job have been identified, including:	
a. Physical requirements for performing the job	
b. Behavioral characteristics essential for job performance	
c. Marginal functions not essential to job performance	
d. Minimum qualification requirements essential for the position	

Step 2: Request Related Documentation Regarding Employee's ADA-Qualifying Disability

If time allows, prior to a formal meeting to discuss a reasonable accommodation request, the employer should request the following from the employee and the employee's treating physician or other acceptable medical professional.

1. Related Documentation

The relevant disability from the employee's treating physician or other acceptable medical professional has been validated, including:

- a. Employee has provided the medical professional with the definition of a disability.
- b. Employee has provided the medical professional a copy of the employee's job description with the essential functions listed and described in detail.

2. Professional Medical Opinion

- a. A professional medical opinion has been obtained that describes the impact of the disability on the employee's ability to functionally perform each essential function of the job (some essential functions may not be affected at all).

3. Reasonable Accommodations

- a. The professional medical opinion includes suggestions for reasonable accommodations.

4. Preparation for Reasonable Accommodation Interview

- a. The employee has been requested to submit or bring the above information to the Reasonable Accommodation Interview (Step 3).

Step 3: Meet With the Employee to Discuss Disability-Related Limitations That May Affect the Job

During the formal *Reasonable Accommodation Interview*, employers, managers, supervisors, or ADA coordinators should begin by reviewing *employer's* responsibilities under the ADA and the purpose of the RAI with the employee.

1. Review Employer's Responsibilities under the ADA

Statements such as the following have been used: "As an employer, I am responsible to make a good faith effort to ...":

- a. Provide reasonable accommodation for the employee in his or her current job. (Provide reasonable accommodation examples, if possible.)
- b. Provide equal employment opportunities.
- c. Provide accommodation unless to do so would be an undue hardship or pose a direct threat to the employee or other employees.
- d. Inform the employee of the consequences of failing to identify a *reasonable* accommodation which will assist the employee in performing the essential functions of the position: the employee may be considered unqualified for the position and it may be necessary to discuss reassignment.

2. Discuss Reassignment to Another Position

- a. Explain that reassignment under the ADA is:
 - Lateral placement, not competitive hire (there are some exceptions with unions and seniority)
 - Into a position for which the employee is qualified
 - Only to a position that is open or will come open within a reasonable amount of time

3. Ask Disability Question

- a. Ask the employee, in a documented interview setting, if he or she considers himself or herself to be a person with a disability.

4. Ask Impact Question

- a. Ask the employee what impact their disability has or will have on their job performance.

5. Review Essential Functions and Impact

- a. Review the essential functions of the job and ask what impact the disability has on each specific job function.

6. Brainstorm Potential Accommodations	
a. Brainstorm potential accommodations with the employee.	
7. Agree to Provide Equal Employment Opportunity through Reasonable Accommodation	
a. Come to an agreement or resolution for providing equal employment opportunities through reasonable accommodation.	
8. Research Accommodations	
a. If no accommodation is identified, research accommodation solutions and alternatives with other professionals.	
9. Keep Record of Reasonable Accommodation Interview	
a. Reasonable Accommodation Interview results are filed in the employee's confidential medical file or the confidential file of the ADA Coordinator, not the personnel file.	

Step 4: Follow-Up

1. Conduct Systematic Follow-Up	
a. Follow-up with the supervisor within 10 days.	
b. Follow-up with the supervisor within 1 month.	
c. Follow-up with the supervisor within 60 days.	
d. Discuss effectiveness of accommodation with employee.	
e. Document all follow-up information.	

Formal Documentation and Record Keeping

Reasonable Accommodation Interview and Follow-up documentation will be filed in the employee's confidential medical file or the confidential file of the ADA Coordinator, not in the personnel file.

Copies of the Reasonable Accommodation Follow-up will remain confidential and be provided directly to the employee or a complaint investigator, if requested.

Resources for Reasonable Accommodation

Northwest ADA Center
 800-949-4232
www.nwadacenter.org

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
 800-526-7234 (V)
 877-781-9403 (TTY)
<http://askjan.org>

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
 1-800-669-4000 (V)
 1-800-669-6820 (TTY)
www.eeoc.gov

¹[Barnett v U.S. Airways, Inc. \(2000\)](#). This important case led to the placement of elements of the interactive process in EEOC guidance.



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Process developed by Don Brandon, Director - Northwest ADA Center

Alternate formats available upon request