

ADA and accommodation: The facts

It's a great way to hire capable, productive new employees.

Accommodation: a 60-second overview

It is your responsibility as an employer to provide reasonable accommodations for otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities throughout the employment process. This includes the job application procedures, hiring, compensation, advancement, training and other privileges of employment.

Accommodation offers employers a significant advantage: it helps them access a new pool of qualified and competent employees who will add to the diversity of the workforce.

The point of accommodation is to assure that qualified individuals with disabilities have the same rights and privileges in employment as employees without disabilities.

Job candidates in Supported Employment are covered by Title I of the ADA.

As of July 1994, employers with 15 or more employees must comply with ADA requirements.

Disclaimer

The preceding is not intended as a comprehensive review of the ADA or accommodation.

For in-depth information and to ask additional questions, call the RI Commission on Human Rights at (401) 277-2661 or the RI Governor's Commission on the Handicapped. Voice /TDD: 277-3731, Fax: 277-2833

How businesses used low- and no-cost accommodations to successfully employ people with disabilities

A mail delivery person within a large company was experiencing difficulty getting presorted mail to the correct departments. The employee has a developmental disability that affects her ability to read.

To solve the problem, the company put each department's mail into a large expanding envelope. Each envelope then had a different symbol stamped on it. A matching symbol was placed next to the door of each department. By matching the symbol on an envelope to the one on the door, each department received the correct bundle. When the mail was too large to fit into the envelope, the package was stamped with the correct symbol.

Cost: \$15 for the ink stamps

A custodial worker with a traumatic brain injury had difficulty remembering the order of the tasks he was supposed to complete.

A small tape player was provided. The supervisor recorded a message with each of the daily tasks in their correct order. The individual could then play the tape-recorded message to determine his next task after the previous one was completed.

Cost: \$35

Source: Job Accommodation Network

A headset was purchased for a telephone sales worker with cerebral palsy to allow her to write the sales information while continuing to talk to the caller.

Cost: less than \$50

A department manager with depression was having difficulty maintaining sufficient concentration to meet necessary deadlines. The individual was allowed a flexible schedule so that he could be in the office during times when interruptions were low. In addition, specific work times were scheduled when the employee was allowed to work in an alternative space where interruptions would not occur.

Cost: \$0

An assembler/operator with a severe vision limitation had the job of wrapping hose - pipe fitting with special tape. This required close examination of the work materials and the quality of work was very important. A total-view magnifier on an adjustable swivel base was installed.

Cost: \$450

A "quick service" restaurant grill operator had a severe learning disability. He could not read, and could recognize only specific single letters in orders for hamburgers.

Condiment bins were coded with the first letter of the item so that the worker could match the orders to the bins. In addition, with the help of a job coach, he was taught three key words ("only," "none," and "plain") through flash card repetition.

Cost: less than \$25

Big News: high accommodation \$ a myth.

Reviewing tens of thousands of actual accommodation cases, the President's committee's Job Accommodation Network discovered that 69% cost less than \$50, 81% cost less than \$1,000, and 19% of accommodations cost nothing. The U.S. Labor Department found further that most accommodation costs were offset by tax incentives or credits to the employer.

Sources: July 1996 President's Committee on Employment for People with Disabilities and the U.S. Department of Labor