



National Network

Information, Guidance and Training on the
Americans with Disabilities Act

Call us toll-free
1-800-949-4232 V/TTY

Find your regional center at
www.adata.org

For the most current and accessible version, please visit
<https://adainfo.us/JobCoachAccommodation>

Job Coaches as Accommodations: A Guide for Employment Service Professionals

As a job coach, you can play an important role in supporting job seekers and employees with disabilities. For example, you can assist an employee to learn job duties, to create strategies for organizing and completing tasks, and to adapt to the workplace. In addition, you can support and educate businesses, so they better understand the potential talent pool of people with disabilities.

A blanket “no job coach allowed” policy eliminates an entire class of reasonable accommodation and may unnecessarily exclude job seekers with disabilities. In fact, a job coach is very often a reasonable accommodation in the workplace, unless the employer can demonstrate this would cause an undue hardship (<https://northeastada.org/glossary/undue-hardship>). Job coaches are often paid by a public or private social service agency.

Guiding employers: The reasonable accommodation process

- A reasonable accommodation is any change to the application or hiring process, to the job, to the way the job is done, or the work environment, that allows a person with a disability who is qualified for the job to perform the essential functions of that job and enjoy equal employment opportunities.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that employers use an *interactive process*, which simply means that employers and employees with disabilities work together to come up with accommodations.
- As a job coach, you can support the job seeker/employee in making the accommodation request by providing information about the need for the accommodation. You can also provide support around exploring, choosing, and implementing the accommodation.
- Explain to employers that you are there to supplement, not replace, the training that the company provides to their employees. Explain that your role is to help reinforce that training and ensure the new employee can succeed in the position. In addition, you can also help to ensure that communication channels develop between the manager and employee with a disability.
- You can use words like *productivity enhancer* or *productivity tool* when explaining your job coaching role. Help the business understand what value the employee adds to the business, and how your supports and services can enhance employee productivity.



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- Accommodations, including job coaches, can be temporary or used on an as-needed basis with the employer. Many times, accommodations are denied because an employer is assuming they will be needed all the time for the entire length of employment when this is not necessarily the case.
- Educate yourself and the business. Think of your ADA expertise as a tool in your business engagement toolkit. Offer support and education to employers on their rights and responsibilities under the ADA.

What if an employer denies a job coach as an accommodation?

For some people with disabilities, job coaches can help ensure success in the workplace. However, employers sometimes worry that adding another person who is not employed by the company presents unnecessary risks. As a result, they may deny a job coach as an accommodation. The ADA is clear that employers decide what accommodation is put into place for their employees. When asking for an accommodation, including a job coach, work with the job seeker or new employee to explain how a job coach will support the new employee's long-term success in the business. If an employer refuses to consider a job coach as a reasonable accommodation, the employee does have recourse.

- If you or the person you are supporting feels that the job seeker or employee has been discriminated against in employment due to their disability, as always, discuss the situation.
- To file a complaint, you may contact your state's human rights commission or Protection and Advocacy System for support and guidance.
- To file a complaint, you may also contact the EEOC (<https://www.eeoc.gov/contact-eeoc>).
- For further information, see the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) resource *Your Accommodation Request Was Denied. What Now?* (<https://askjan.org/publications/consultants-corner/Your-Accommodation-Request-Was-Denied-What-Now.cfm>).
- For further information, support, and guidance, check out the ADA National Networks resources at www.adata.org or call your regional ADA center at 1-800-949-4232.

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<https://northeastada.org>

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