



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

You have a lot to Offer: Ten Points for Veterans to Consider When Returning to Work with a Disability

1. Focus on your strengths and abilities.

As a veteran, you have a lot to offer in the workplace: skills, discipline, teamwork, resilience and courage. This is true even if you have a disability. Your talents, skills, passions and aspirations matter now as much as they ever did. Don't sell yourself short! Work isn't just about money. It's also about getting back to civilian life, meeting people and applying the skills and experiences learned in the military. Returning to work can be part of the healing process.

2. Working and benefits

Veterans with disabilities are eligible for a number of different benefits that can help them return to work. Benefits and work incentives planning are critical supports to aid veterans with disabilities in balancing their recovery, managing the array of public benefits they receive (e.g., Veterans Administration, Social Security Administration, healthcare and others) and taking their first steps toward going back to work. For more information, go to *Navigating government benefits and employment: A guidebook for veterans with disabilities* from The Institute for Veterans and Military Families at <http://vets.syr.edu/pdfs/benefits-guidebook.pdf>.

3. Some disabilities are obvious to others; some are not.

Conditions like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury (TBI) may not always be obvious to others. But these conditions are often considered disabilities under the law. For more information or to ask a question call the ADA National Network at 800-949-4232 or visit adata.org.

4. Telling others about a disability when applying for a job: It's a choice.

You do not have to tell a potential employer about your disability when applying for a job, even if you think you might need an accommodation. This is not "lying." It is a legally protected choice. For more information about your rights when applying for a job, for more information or to ask a question call the ADA National Network at 800-949-4232 or visit www.adata.org.

5. Telling about a disability: Making a decision that's right for you.

Before applying for a job, think through your decision about telling a potential employer about a disability. Some people choose not to let the employer know they have a disability. They might think the disability would not impact the job. They might worry that they won't be considered fairly for the job or that the employer would not understand. Others decide they do want to tell about their disability so they can discuss what their needs will be or just to avoid surprises after they get hired. For help deciding what's best for you, go to the Job Accommodation Network's "Disclosure" information at www.askjan.org/topics/discl.htm.

6. What is a reasonable accommodation?

An accommodation is any change in the work environment or in how things are usually done that enables a worker with a disability to work and do the essential functions of a job. Examples of accommodations include changing a work space so



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that it is wheelchair accessible, changing the work schedule, or allowing an employee to work from home for part of the time. For more information or to ask a question call the ADA National Network at 900-949-4232 or visit adata.org.

www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-userra.htm

7. Asking for a reasonable accommodation.

Any worker with a disability has the right to a reasonable accommodation when applying for a job and when working. Let the hiring manager or employer know that you need an adjustment or change because of a disability. An employer might decide to get more medical information about your condition in order to understand your accommodation need. All of this information must be kept confidential and separate from your normal employment records. For more information, go to the Job Accommodation Network's "Employees' Practical Guide to Negotiating and Requesting Reasonable Accommodations Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)" at

www.askjan.org/Eguide/index.htm

8. Types of accommodations you might need.

When it comes to accommodations, no one size fits all. Even veterans with the same condition might need different types of accommodations depending on their job, their situation and the duration of their disability. Think about how your condition could impact job tasks. The employer must pay for the accommodation, but most accommodations cost far

less than what employers believe. Find out about different accommodations at the Job Accommodation Network's "Accommodation Information by Disability: A to Z" at www.askjan.org/media/atoz.htm.

9. Getting an accommodation is not a "special favor" or a weakness.

Needing an accommodation does not mean you are weak or not qualified for the job. An employer cannot punish or fire you because you ask for an accommodation. If you are struggling with a specific job task due to your disability, consider asking for an accommodation before it impacts job performance. An accommodation is not a special favor or a sign of weakness; it is a legally protected right. For more information or to ask a question call the ADA National Network at 900-949-4232 or visit www.adata.org.

10. Myths about workers with disabilities—don't buy into them!

Studies show that employees with disabilities perform as well on the job as any other employee. They may just do things a little differently. For more information, see the U.S. Department of Labor's "Myths and Facts about Workers with Disabilities" at www.doleta.gov/disability/htmldocs/myths.cfm

Content was developed by the Northeast ADA Center, and is based on professional consensus of ADA experts and the ADA National Network.



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