

FACT SHEET

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

SEPTEMBER 2003

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, protects qualified employees and applicants with disabilities in the Executive Branch of the Federal Government from employment discrimination based on disability.

In 1992, the substantive employment standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42, 42 U.S.C. Section 1211, were made applicable to the Federal Government through the Rehabilitation Act.

The amended law requires Federal employers to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities, enabling employees with disabilities to enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment equal to those enjoyed by employees without disabilities.

It requires federal agencies to provide reasonable accommodation for known physical or mental disabilities to qualified employees and applicants, unless to do so would cause an undue hardship. The Law also ensures equal access to Federal programs, activities, and facilities for people with disabilities.

Executive Order 13164 requires Federal Agencies to develop effective written procedures for requesting a reasonable accommodation within their chain of command.

WHO DO I ASK FOR AN ACCOMMODATION?

- ☞ Employees can ask their first line supervisor or others within their chain of command.

WHO CAN REQUEST AN ACCOMMODATION?

- ☞ Any employee or his/her representative may request accommodations. This can include a family member, healthcare provider, co-worker, etc.

It is the policy of the Natural Resources Conservation Service to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO REQUEST AN ACCOMMODATION?

- ☞ Prior to a job interview, or anytime during Federal employment as needed.

- ☞ The interactive process requires that the person with a disability be involved in the accommodation process from the beginning. No one is more familiar with the disability and the type of accommodation that would be most effective than the person living with a disability.

All accommodations must be addressed on a case by case basis. All information MUST be kept confidential.

Request for an accommodation can be written or oral and need not specifically use the phrase "reasonable accommodation."

Medical documentation may be requested if the employee has a hidden or previously unknown disability.

If the employee has a known disability, medical documentation may not be necessary in some cases.

Assistive technology accommodations (scanner, readers, TTY (text telephone), alternative keyboards) can be provided by the USDA TARGET Center through the Department of Defenses Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP) with no cost to NRCS.

Most accommodations are low in cost.

Accommodations should be in place within thirty (30) days of the request, unless there are extenuating circumstances (and the employee must be notified).

HOW CAN I GET THE REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION PROCEDURE?

- ☞ Contact your Human Resources Officer, or your Disability Emphasis Program Manager (DEPM)

OR

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