



Interviewing Applicants with Disabilities

- Interviewing individuals with disabilities is the same as interviewing individuals who do not have disabilities; you will be asking questions to determine their skills and qualifications for the job.
- Concentrate on the individual, not on the disability.
- Always focus on the individual's technical and professional knowledge, skills, education, experience and interest in doing the job.
- Ask only job-related questions that speak to the functions of the job for which the applicant is applying.
- If the applicant has a known disability, either because it is obvious or was revealed by the applicant, you may ask the individual to describe how he/she will perform the essential functions of the job.
- If the disability is not obvious or revealed, **DO NOT** ask the individual **any** questions regarding his/her disability until a tentative offer for employment has been extended; this includes questions concerning reasonable accommodations. *The applicant is responsible for informing you of any accommodation needs.*
- Prior to a job offer, medical examinations are prohibited under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). However, a job offer may be conditional based on the results of the results of a medical examination if **all** employees entering the position are required to take an examination.



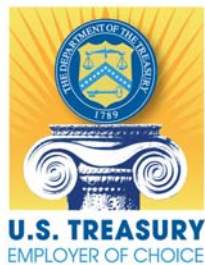
Interviewing Tips

When Interviewing an Applicant Who Uses a Wheelchair

- Don't lean on the wheelchair.
- Get on the same eye level with the applicant if the conversation lasts more than a minute or so.
- Don't push the wheelchair unless you are asked.
- Keep accessibility in mind. Are objects in your office a barrier to a wheelchair user? If so, move them aside.
- Don't be embarrassed to use such phrases as, "Let's walk over to the conference room."

When Interviewing an Applicant Who is Blind

- Immediately identify yourself and others present. If the applicant is visually impaired you can say something like "it's nice to meet you, can I shake your hand?" Or you can touch their hand to indicate that you intend to shake their hand.
- Use verbal cues; be descriptive in giving directions.
- Verbalize chair location, or place the person's hand on the back of the chair, but do not place the person in the chair.
- Don't be embarrassed to use such phrases as, "Do you see what I mean?"
- Don't shout.
- Keep doors either open or closed; a half-open door is a serious hazard.
- Offer assistance with mobility; let the applicant grasp your left arm, usually just above the elbow.
- Do not touch an applicant's cane. Do not touch a guide dog when in a harness. In fact, resist the temptation to pet a guide dog.



When Interviewing an Applicant Who is Deaf

- You may need to use a physical signal to get the applicant's attention.
- If the applicant is lip reading, enunciate clearly, keep your mouth clear of obstructions, and place yourself where there is ample lighting. Keep in mind that an accomplished lip reader will be able to clearly understand only 30-35% of what you are saying.
- The best method to communicate is use a combination of voice, gestures and facial expressions. (In the future, you may also want to consider learning how to fingerspell, or, if you are more ambitious, taking a course in American Sign Language.)
- Don't shout.
- If you don't understand what the applicant is telling you, don't pretend you did. Ask the candidate to repeat the sentence(s).
- When scheduling an interview, ask the applicant if you should arrange for a sign language interpreter. There are different types of sign language, (i.e., American Sign Language, Signed English, etc.), so ask the applicant which type of signed language is preferred. Keep in mind that the interpreter's job is to translate, not to get involved in any other way. Therefore, always face and speak directly to the applicant, not the interpreter. Don't say to the interpreter, "Tell her...."
- Interviews may pose problems for some deaf and hard of hearing individuals and for those with certain kinds of speech challenges. Do not make assumptions about an applicant's preferred medium of communication. Analyze the needs of the individual in relation to the specific demands of the interview process. In some cases, it may be appropriate for interview committee members to give a written copy of interview questions to deaf or hard of hearing applicants to read prior to the interview.



When Interviewing an Applicant Who has an Intellectual or Cognitive Disability

- Use simple, concrete language, but don't use "baby talk."
- When giving instructions or directions, proceed slowly.
- Be patient, and repeat if necessary.
- Ask the applicant to summarize the information you have given to make sure it was understood.
- Give positive feedback whenever possible and appropriate.