

**PROCESSING REQUESTS FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION BY
EMPLOYEES AND APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES**

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To establish the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy on providing reasonable accommodation to qualified employees or applicants for employment with disabilities.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS:** This directive establishes policy to facilitate the processing of reasonable accommodation requests received by employees and applicants for employment who have disabilities. The directive contains:
 - a. VA's policy on providing reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities;
 - b. Responsibilities for key officials in implementing and managing a process to expedite requests for reasonable accommodation; and
 - c. Definitions.
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Human Resources Management Programs and Policies Service (051), Office of Human Resources Management.
- 4. RELATED HANDBOOK:** VA Handbook 5975.1, Processing Requests for Reasonable Accommodation by Employees and Applicants with Disabilities.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** None.

CERTIFIED BY:

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/
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Assistant Secretary for
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Distribution: Electronic

PROCESSING REQUESTS FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION BY EMPLOYEES AND APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES

1. PURPOSE. To establish Departmental policy on providing reasonable accommodation to qualified employees or applicants for employment with disabilities. It also designates responsibilities and prescribes procedures for submitting and responding to requests for reasonable accommodation.

2. POLICY

a. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) shall provide reasonable accommodation to qualified employees or applicants with disabilities for employment, unless to do so would cause undue hardship.

b. The provisions of these guidelines apply to all VA employees and applicants for employment who have long-term or permanent disabilities. The Department may provide reasonable accommodations to individuals who have temporary disabilities on an "as needed basis." The legal authorities for these guidelines include: The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which is contained in 29 U.S.C. Section 791 et seq.; 29 CFR 1614; 29 CFR Part 1630; and Executive Order 13164.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Secretary of Veterans Affairs.** The Secretary or Deputy Secretary will ensure that an effective process for responding to requests for reasonable accommodation is established.

b. **Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration.** The Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration (through the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management) will:

(1) Develop policy and provide guidance.

(2) Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the process for responding to requests for accommodation and recommend modifications as needed.

c. **Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials will, within their respective organization:**

(1) Provide sufficient resources to ensure effective implementation and management of a process for responding to requests for reasonable accommodation.

(2) Ensure training to managers, supervisors, team leaders, and human resource management specialists is conducted on their role in processing requests for reasonable accommodation.

(3) Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the process for responding to requests for reasonable accommodation.

4. REFERENCES. Title 29 U.S.C. Section 791; 29 CFR 1614; and 29 CFR 1630; Executive Order 13164; and Collective Bargaining Agreements as appropriate.

5. DEFINITIONS

a. **Qualified Individual with a Disability:** With respect to employment, an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the position in question without endangering the health or safety of the individual or others, and depending upon the type of appointing authority being used: (1) meets the experience or education requirements, which may include passing a written test, of the position in question; and (2) meets the criteria for appointment under one of the special appointing authorities for individuals with disabilities.

b. **Reasonable Accommodation:** An adjustment to job duties or to the work environment that assists a qualified individual with a disability in performing the essential duties of his or her position; or a modification of or adjustment to the job application process that enables a qualified applicant with a disability to be considered for the position sought. Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Making facilities readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities;
- (2) Job restructuring;
- (3) Allowing a part-time or modified work schedule;
- (4) Obtaining or modifying equipment or devices;
- (5) Appropriately adjusting or modifying examinations and training materials;
- (6) Providing readers, interpreters, and other auxiliary aids;
- (7) Ensuring that all contracts for the use of external facilities reflect the obligation that such facilities are accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities; and
- (8) Reassignment to another position.

