



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

As a veteran with a disability, you are eligible for a number of different benefits that can help you return to work. Benefits and work incentives planning can help you balance your recovery, manage the array of public benefits you receive (e.g., Veterans Administration, Social Security Administration, healthcare and others) and take your 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 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For more information, call the ADA National Network at 800-949-4232 or visit <http://www.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, call the ADA National Network at 800-949-4232 or visit 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 <http://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 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, call the ADA National Network at 900-949-4232 or visit <http://www.adata.org>.

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 <http://www.askjan.org/Eeguide/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 <http://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. The ADA prohibits an employer from punishing or firing you because you've asked 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. For more information, call the ADA National Network at 800-949-4232 or visit <http://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

Developed by



Northeast ADA Center

[Employment and Disability Institute](http://www.adata.org)

[Cornell University](http://www.cornell.edu)

[ILR School](http://www.ilr.cornell.edu)

201 Dolgen Hall

Ithaca, New York 14853

Phone: **1-800-949-4232** (Voice, TTY & Spanish in New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands)

In other areas: 607-255-6686 (Voice, TTY, Spanish) Fax: 607-255-2763

Email: northeastada@cornell.edu

Content is based on professional consensus of ADA experts and the ADA National Network.

This information product was developed under a grant from the Department of Education, NIDRR grant number H133A110015. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.



©Copyright 2013 ADA National Network. All Rights Reserved.