

# Workplace Accommodations: What is Reasonable?

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Are you considering employment, but you aren't sure if you can perform the essential functions of a job? Are you an employer that is committed to hiring a diverse workforce, including individuals with disabilities?

Reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are modifications or adjustments to a job, work environment, or the way things are usually done that enable qualified individuals with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities. The ADA defines a person with a disability as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more "major life activities," has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.

Reasonable accommodations should be determined through an interactive process between the employer and the employee with a disability.

A recent employer survey from the Job Accommodation Network returned findings that more than half of job accommodation requests cost \$0. Of those accommodations that did have a one-time cost, the median one-time expenditure as reported by the employer was \$300. Employers reported the following benefits of providing accommodations to their employees: retaining valuable employees, improving productivity and morale, reducing workers' compensation and training costs, and improving company diversity. ([https://askjan.org/topics/costs.cfm?csSearch=6475163\\_1](https://askjan.org/topics/costs.cfm?csSearch=6475163_1))

## Examples of reasonable accommodations:

- Modifications to the application or hiring process.
- Providing accessible facilities or making physical changes to the workspace to accommodate employees with mobility impairments.
- Flexible work schedules or modified workspaces to accommodate medical appointments or treatments.
- Providing assistive technology or software.
- Noise cancelling headphones.
- Color coding systems.
- Additional training time.
- Written instructions.

Reasonable accommodations do not include removing essential job functions, creating new jobs, and providing personal need items such as eyeglasses and mobility aids. Nothing in the ADA prohibits employers from providing these types of accommodations; they simply are not required accommodations. When an accommodation would cause such a burden that it would amount to an undue hardship to provide, then an employer is not obligated to provide that particular accommodation. Determining undue hardship largely depends on fact-specific details that must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

**Additional Resources:**

See the Job Accommodation Network: [www.askjan.org](http://www.askjan.org) for more info.

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