



# Tips for Retaining Persons with disabilities

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- Develop open communication to ensure employees with a disability feel comfortable discussing how their needs and abilities are being or can be accommodated in their positions.
- Provide specific and detailed descriptions of what is required to succeed in positions – include duties, interactions with staff / supervisors / customers, physical descriptions of work environments.
- Remember the person with a disability is usually the expert on accommodations they might need once a clear overview of a position is provided.
- There may be times when the employee with a disability needs to try the job out to determine whether and what accommodations are needed.



# TYPICAL ACCOMMODATIONS USED TO RETAIN PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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**Persons with cognitive disabilities may benefit from one or more of the following accommodations:**

- Include demonstrations of duties in orientations to positions.
- Introduce duties gradually starting with key expectations and reduce work environment distractions.
- Design basic work and schedule checklists.
- Assign a Peer Mentor.
- Provide specific and regular feedback.

**Persons with vision loss may benefit from one or more of the following accommodations:**

- A physical orientation to the work environment when they start work and when things change in the work environment.
- Keep work areas clear of obstacles.
- Ensure lighting is not an issue.
- Provide any assistive devices and/or specialized software the person needs to do their work.



## **Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing may benefit from one or more of the following accommodations:**

- A mode of communication that works for the work environment. Options are:
  - € Use ASL-English Interpreters for important meetings.
  - € Use email, computer or handwriting messages.
  - € Provide and use assistive devices such as text paging devices, lighting systems, vibrating devices and TTY's.
  - € Face the person when you are talking to them.
  - € Use hand signals or gestures.

## **Persons with mobility issues may benefit from one or more of the following accommodations:**

- Making sure your worksite is physically accessible.
- Making adaptations to the work environment when needed. This may include providing assistive devices such as cordless keyboards / telephone headsets, lowering panels and redesigning workstations.
- Providing flexible scheduling of shifts and/or breaks.

## **Persons with a stabilized Mental Illness may benefit from one or more of the following accommodations:**

- Provide clear orientations to duties, followed by consistent feedback.
- Provide flexible scheduling and/or part time work.
- Ensure supportive supervision is available.



## Why make accommodations?

- When someone has a sensory impairment they often develop a heightened ability to focus on work and follow safety guidelines.
- Persons with cognitive disabilities often remain challenged by their duties and productive at their work for longer periods of times.
- Physical adaptations to work environments frequently benefit others including customers.
- Accommodating needs related to a mental illness parallel the needs many workers have for job sharing, job carving and strategies that reduce stress in work environments.
- Creative accommodating of employees often brings higher levels of production to work environments, promotes team building and demonstrates that employers value their employees.
- Once employers begin to make accommodations for persons with disabilities, these accommodations often benefit everyone in the workplace.
- Employers who learn to value diversity, often gain a new appreciation of individual strengths and needs of their employees.

## Final Tip

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The person with a disability is a person first.

The success you achieve making accommodations and retaining a person with a disability must also be attributed to this first – as is true for any employee.