**How To Request Accommodations**

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**https://choosework.ssa.gov/blog/2018-07-19-how-to-request-accommodations**

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On July 16, the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) discussed the [3 main reasons you might choose to disclose your disability](https://choosework.ssa.gov/blog/2018-07-16-talking-about-disability-disclosure) to your employer or to a potential employer. Today, JAN returns to offer more information and some guidance on how to disclose your disability and request accommodations.

Even though many people struggle with the idea of disclosing a disability, disclosure can be quite simple and it can help you secure accommodations to help you succeed in the workplace. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), there is no specific time frame for requesting an accommodation, but we recommend that you disclose your disability and request accommodations before you have difficulties on the job, or at least before they become serious and affect your performance. Open communication during disclosure and the accommodation process is probably the most direct and effective tool for handling the issues that arise and getting back on track to completing workplace assignments or starting a new job with the tools you need. Once you're ready, follow these tips to help you through the process.

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| **Learn more with JAN***If you’re interested in learning more about the ADA, disclosure and reasonable accommodations, check out this month’s WISE webinar! JAN will join us to talk about the ADA and how reasonable accommodations may help you succeed as you apply for jobs and transition to the workplace.****Date:****Wednesday, July 25, 2018****Time:****3 – 4:30 p.m. ET****Register:***[*choosework.ssa.gov/wise*](https://choosework.ssa.gov/webinars-tutorials/index.html)*or call 866-968-7842 or 866-833-2967 (TTY) M-F 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET* |

**Keep it simple**

You can tell your employer that you need an adjustment or change because of a medical condition. You may use plain English. You do not have to mention the ADA or use the phrase "reasonable accommodation." It can be as easy as saying to your employer, "I need to talk to you about the difficulty I have when trying to get to work on time due to the medication I take."

**Put it in writing**

At JAN, we recommend putting your disclosure and request for accommodations in writing so you have documentation of what you asked for and when you asked. Under the ADA, however, there are no requirements to submit requests in writing. Some employers have their own paperwork. You can ask your employer about the paperwork and start there, you can submit a letter from your medical provider, or you can write a letter and attach your medical documentation.

**Talk to the right people**

You can disclose the information to whomever you feel most comfortable giving it to. Some employees aren’t comfortable with their direct supervisors knowing about their medical condition or diagnosis, so we advise disclosing this information to the human resources (HR) department. Someone there would be chosen to verify that you do have a disability under the ADA. This confidential information is then stored in a separate locked file that other employees won't have access to. HR then moves forward with the accommodation process where your supervisor may be involved in providing the accommodations.

You can find out specifically how the accommodation process works by checking your employer's handbook or policies. HR should be able to advise you on the details.

**How it works: an example**



When Rich started his job, he had his own private workspace that allowed him to concentrate and stay on task quite well. With the news that his employer was moving all employees into cubicles in a smaller, more open floor space, Rich knew he was going to have issues with both visual and auditory distractions due to his attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

He asked his HR department for a meeting to discuss a disability and the need for accommodations. He provided a written summary of what his strengths were, how he has been able to be successful so far in his current location, and why he feels he will have difficulty in an open office setting due to the distractions he knows will occur. He provided a note from his doctor that documents his ADHD, with information about his difficulties in concentration, focus, and time management that would likely be increased by the noisy, open space. He listed ideas for accommodations, and then in the meeting with HR he discussed his concerns about the open workspace and recommended what will work for him.

His employer decides to provide advanced notice of the details of the move and allow Rich to help choose a workspace within the open area that would be best for him before coworkers are placed. Additional ideas such as taller cubicle walls and noise-reducing products are also discussed.

**Finding help**

If you need help with the disclosure process and requesting accommodations, JAN may be able to offer you more information, answers and support. JAN is funded by a contract with the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), U.S. Department of Labor. JAN offers free, expert and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations. Their experts can help you through the disclosure process and help you find accommodations that may help you succeed during job interviews and on the job. Learn more about JAN and start finding accommodations information at [askjan.org](https://askjan.org/).