

Students With Disabilities Resources

Being a student with a disability can add an extra layer of challenge during the job search process. There are many resources available to assist you with finding a job after graduation. The first thing to understand is the law and your rights, due to the Americans with Disabilities Act. According to the ADA National Network,

“The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.” (<https://adata.org/learn-about-ada>)

Title I of the American’s with Disabilities Act was created to help people with disabilities access the same employment opportunities and benefits available to people without disabilities. This is regulated and enforced by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and employers with 15 or more employees must comply.

“Employers must provide reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants or employees. A reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable an applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions.” (<https://adata.org/learn-about-ada>)

Questions & Answers

Question: Do I have to disclose my disability before or during a job interview?

Answer: No, you do not have to disclose your disability.

It is against the law for an employer to ask you in an application or in an interview if you have a disability. Employers can ask the following question to you, "Can you perform these duties with or without reasonable accommodations?" If you are able to perform those duties with or without reasonable accommodations, then the answer is simply, "Yes!" You do not have to reveal the accommodations you need to fulfill the job until you are already hired and needing to inform the employer of those accommodations.

Before an interview, you may want to disclose certain disabilities and necessary accommodations. For example, if you use a wheelchair for mobility, the company would be interested in knowing this to ensure that the interview room is wheelchair accessible. Revealing this information might save some embarrassment on both your end and the employer's end, if they are not prepared to accommodate you. It would benefit you to ask an employer before an interview, "What does an interview look like at your organization?" Knowing this information would help you determine if you need to reveal any disabilities and accommodations.

Sometimes on a job application, you may see voluntary questions (not required) about disabilities, military status, demographics, etc. These questions are not shared with the search committee or hiring person. These responses are used for the human resource department or the equal opportunity and access office at that company for reporting purposes. Many organizations keep track of the percentage of applicants and employees that have disabilities. But these questions on the application are voluntary, you do not have to answer them.

Question: Are there online resources to help me with the job search and to answer my concerns about work accommodations and state laws?

Answer: Yes, the Job Accommodations Network (JAN) is a very helpful resource (<https://askjan.org/>)

The Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) section of the website, allows you to search for and explore accommodation options.

You can connect with JAN at (800)526-7234 (Voice) or (877)781-9403 (TTY). There is an opportunity to talk to a state accommodations counselor to learn more about working in that particular state.

Other Online Resources from the Job Accommodations Network:

[Hire Disability Solutions](#)

Provides comprehensive career services to facilitate employment for people with disabilities, veterans, their family members, and others who face challenges in their lives.

[ABILITY Jobs](#)

Since 1995, ABILITY Jobs has helped 100's of thousands of job seekers with disabilities in their employment search. With the first stand-alone resume bank, employers can actively seek talented people with disabilities looking for work.

Additional Resources

[Illinois DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation](#)

Provides a six-month, one-to-one mentoring opportunity for college students and recent graduates with disabilities by matching them with professionals with whom they share common career interests

[National Federation of the Blind](#)

Offers internships and academic seminars in Washington, D.C. for academic credit

[AHEAD](#)

A premiere professional association committed to full participation of persons with disabilities in postsecondary education

[Disability.gov](#)

A list of helpful web resources provided by the U.S. Department of Labor

[ODEP \(Office of Disability Employment Policy\)](#)

Manages a number of efforts designed to advance disability employment

[AAPD \(American Association of People with Disabilities\)](#)

AAPD is a convener, connector, and catalyst for change, increasing the political and economic power of people with disabilities