



Four Tips for Job Searching for People with Disabilities

Today, many companies recognize the real benefits that diversity in the workplace brings. We're all aware of the push to create a more diverse and inclusive workplace for of different races, ethnicity, and sexual orientation – and while that is vital to continue putting efforts towards, there's often a diverse workforce that gets overlooked. Individuals with disabilities often face significant obstacles during the job search and interview processes, making it more difficult for them to secure a position when compared to their able-bodied counterparts.

People with disabilities possess all the same skills and determination to succeed in many jobs, but discrimination and incorrect stereotypes can often keep them from entering the workforce. Here are four tips for job seekers with disabilities.



Emphasize Your Abilities

Applicants with disabilities can set themselves apart from other candidates by highlighting their skills and accomplishments. In your cover letter and resume, describe the type of work that interests you and why you are interested in working for this company. Use examples from past work or school activities that show communication, teamwork, and leadership skills. Express enthusiasm for the job and explain how you will contribute to the workplace.

Unless a disability would need to be accommodated during an interview, it's not necessary to mention it on an application. For example, if you have difficulty walking long distances or climbing stairs, ask if there is an elevator in the building where interviews occur before arriving. In an interview, you should never downplay the limitations you may have. Instead, focus on how you can add value to the company. Be confident that your abilities can serve as an advantage to the workplace. Demonstrate that you were a valuable contributor to past employers and explain how you overcame a challenge that was difficult but rewarding for you.

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Refuse to Answer Inappropriate Questions

The ADA defines a disability as a “physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.” This means an interviewer can’t ask you about any medical history before making them a job offer. However, there are some appropriate questions that can be asked during an interview you’ll want to be aware of and prepared for. For example, you may be asked if you need accommodation during the interview process and whether you can perform the job with reasonable accommodation. You do not have to wait until you’re hired to disclose your disability.

Suppose an employer asks about a disability in an interview. In that case, the individual may ask if that is a legal question before answering, and if they are persistent and continue to push for an answer, that may indicate a non-inclusive work environment where you won’t be set up for success. It’s important to know that if you receive a conditional offer of employment, an employer may ask about your health. This is allowed as long as all candidates are treated equally.



Discuss Gaps in Work History

The best way to deal with gaps in your work history is by being honest with potential employers. If you have gaps in your work history because of health problems, make the interviewer aware of the situation and current circumstances. It’s OK to tell potential employers that you stopped working because of a serious decline in health.

When addressing a gap in employment, it’s fine to briefly explain the reason for the gap directly in your cover letter or include an explanation in your interview. However, be sure to highlight your work history. As you apply for positions, be prepared to share your work history and relevant information, such as how much time you’re willing to commit to working or any particular health considerations.

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Be an Advocate for Your Needs

If you have a disability, don't be afraid to advocate for yourself in the workplace; you are the expert on your own needs. Let potential employers know about the technologies and accommodations that help you work most efficiently. If you need a handicap friendly desk, accessible entrances/exits, special lighting, flexible work hours, the opportunity to work remotely, screen-reading software, or other accommodations for a disability, let your employer know early to plan accordingly.

Employers are required by law to accommodate employees with disabilities. Being upfront about your needs will allow employers to work out the reasonable accommodations. During your interview or during orientation to the job, let your new supervisor know that you have a disability and may need to be accommodated to perform specific tasks. By allowing your supervisor and coworkers to know about your disability, they will be able to help you succeed in your position.

Job seekers with disabilities offer a highly talented workforce. By learning how to highlight your abilities, challenge employers' outdated stereotypes and discrimination, and address gaps in work experience, you can increase your chances of securing a position where you will be happy and successful.

About EG Workforce Solutions

We've been in this business for decades and have developed a deep network of professional connections. Whether they're companies looking for talent, job seekers looking for work, or an up-and-coming store in need of some temporary help, we know the right people to bridge the gap between the hiring and the hired.

But what's more, we get to know people. From employers hiring to candidates looking, we take the time to listen and learn. We hear your likes, talents, and needs. We gain an understanding, and with it, we're able to facilitate lasting relationships between businesses and people.

