

Discussing Disability

Many employers do not know how to approach the issue of disability with job candidates, particularly during the interview process. It can lead to awkward pauses and difficulty finding the right words, but it doesn't have to. People with disabilities expect to be interviewed in the same manner as every other candidate.

As with any job candidate, the focus is on the person and their skills relating to the job. You are interviewing a person, not a wheelchair. Once you determine if the person is right for the job, then you can have open discussions to enquire about necessary accommodations.

The purpose of an interview is to find the perfect person for the job. It is not up to you to judge whether a person can physically perform the duties. If you find the perfect person for the job but have concerns they may not be able to perform a particular duty, as an employer, you must ask yourself if the particular duty is required to do the job (Bona Fide Occupational Requirement) or if it could be modified to suit the individual's restrictions.

As an employer, you are able to ask questions about a disability to clarify workplace needs only. The person often feels comfortable discussing any challenges he or she might face in the workplace and would not have applied for the job if he or she did not feel they would be able to perform the duties of it.

If you wish to clarify the potential need for accommodations or any possible barriers the person might face, it is ok to ask some questions, such as:

- Are there any restrictions to the work that you can do? Ask all candidates in advance whether they have any needs that will require special support or accommodation during the interview.
- Is there any aspect of this job that you would have difficulty performing? If so, how can we make that possible for you?
- Are there any environmental considerations, such as access to bathrooms and door handles, that we would need to modify?

If you have any questions on the interview process, please contact InfoLine at **1-800-689-2477**.