

## **Fact Sheet**

### **Key Definitions**

#### **What is a reasonable accommodation?**

A reasonable accommodation is any change to the application or hiring process, to the job, to the way the job is done, or the work environment that allows a person with a disability who is qualified for the job to perform the essential functions of that job and enjoy equal employment opportunities. Accommodations are considered “reasonable” if they do not create an undue hardship or a direct threat.

#### **Who is an “individual with a disability?”**

An individual meets the Americans with Disabilities with Act definition act of “disability” that would qualify them for reasonable accommodations if they have “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (sometimes referred to in the regulations as an “actual disability”).” If a disability is not obvious to an employer, they can ask for medical documentation from a health care provider to confirm the need for an accommodation.

Individuals who solely are “regarded as” having a disability but do not have a disability, are not qualified to receive reasonable accommodations.

#### **What are “essential functions?”**

In order to be qualified for a position, an applicant or employee must be able to perform essential job functions. Essential functions are job duties that are fundamental to the position, they are the reason the job exists. Some of the factors for determining essential functions of a job include:

- Whether the position exists specifically to perform these essential functions.
- The number of other employees who are available to perform the same job duties.
- The expertise or skills required to perform the essential functions.

#### **What are some examples of reasonable accommodation?**

**Provide Alternative Formats:** A supervisor gives feedback in writing, rather than verbally, for an employee who communicates better through written materials.

**Accessible Parking:** An employer changes its practice of only offering parking to upper management to allow an employee who is unable to walk long distances access to a reserved parking spot close to the building.

**Equipment Change:** An employer purchases software that magnifies the computer screen to allow an employee with low vision to correctly enter and read information on the computer.

**Reorganization of the Job:** The employer provides a checklist to ensure task completion for an employee who has an intellectual disability.

**Reassignment:** Reassignment is the reasonable accommodation in some situations. An employer may reassign an employee to an open position if the employee can no longer perform the essential functions of their current job. **The employer does not have to create a new position, no other employees need be transferred or terminated in order to make a position vacant for the purpose of reassignment, and the individual with a disability should be qualified for the new position.**