



It is necessary to provide appropriate, reasonable accommodations to ensure that all employees can perform the essential functions of their jobs, and to fully understand, participate in and have equal access to all aspects of work. This includes, but is not limited to, accommodations for:

- ◆ staff meetings,
- ◆ company-sponsored events such as picnics and parties,
- ◆ company-sponsored seminars or workshops.

Accommodations should be provided regardless of where the event is held.



**MARYLAND
BUSINESS
LEADERSHIP
NETWORK**

This fact sheet and others can be found at www.mdod.maryland.gov and www.mdworkforcepromise.org.

Questions?

Contact the Maryland Business Leadership Network.

Resources for Reasonable Accommodation Requests

Overview

Where can you learn more about assistive technology or how to acquire a worksite assessment? Where can you get your employee handbook converted to Braille for an employee who is blind? How do you arrange for an interpreter for an interview with an individual who is deaf? This fact sheet is designed to answer these questions for you. Before going through the process of acquiring an accommodation, it is a good idea to consult with the qualified applicant or employee regarding his or her preferred mode of communication. Each person is unique – not all individuals who are deaf communicate through sign language, nor do all individuals who are blind read Braille. The applicant or employee should be actively engaged in the accommodation process.

Tax incentives and credits are available to encourage hiring individuals with disabilities and to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Eligible businesses may receive a tax credit for certain costs of compliance, including providing auxiliary aids and services. Auxiliary aids and services include materials in alternate formats, interpreters and notetakers. For more information on these credits, refer to the fact sheet entitled *Tax Incentives/Credits*.

Assistive Technology as an Accommodation

Assistive technology (AT) devices are often used as job accommodations. AT can be as simple as wooden blocks placed under table legs to raise table height to accommodate a wheelchair or as complex as a computer with speech output for individuals who are blind.

Each state has a federally funded assistive technology program that provides AT information, consultation and resources. Contact information for the **Maryland Technology Assistance Program (MD TAP)** is listed in the resource section of this fact sheet. Fees may apply for some services.

There are 10 federally funded regional *Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers* (DBTAC) that provide information and training on the ADA and accessible information technology. Contact information for **DBTAC: Mid-Atlantic ADA Center** is listed in the resource section of this fact sheet. Fees may apply for some services.

Blind or Low Vision

For employees who are blind or have low vision, a reasonable accommodation would be to provide access to printed work-related materials, such as employee handbooks and benefits information, in accessible formats. Accessible formats include materials in large print, Braille, electronic files or media and/or accessible web pages. The effective job accommodation or appropriate format will vary from person to person. It is always a good idea to include the qualified applicant or employee in the accommodation process.

Services for the Visually Impaired and **Braille Enterprises** are two Maryland businesses that provide Braille transcription. Contact information is listed in the resource section of this fact sheet.

Some **Centers for Independent Living** (CIL) offer Braille transcription services, as well. Visit Independent Living Research Utilization's website (<http://www.ilru.org/html/publications/directory/maryland.html>) to locate a CIL in your region.

The **Division of Rehabilitation Services Office for Blindness and Vision Services** can assist in providing reasonable accommodations for eligible applicants or employees. Contact information is listed in the resource section of this fact sheet.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing

The type of job accommodation for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing will vary according to the person and the specific situation. It is a good idea to consult with the qualified applicant or employee regarding his or her preferred mode of communication.

Sign Language Interpreters: Sign Language Interpreters are trained professionals who provide the necessary communication link between hearing and deaf or hard of hearing individuals. Interpreters assist by

- ◆ interpreting the signed message into spoken English for the hearing individual.
- ◆ interpreting the spoken message for the individual who is deaf or hard of hearing.
- ◆ conveying the intent, feeling and content of the message to both parties involved.
- ◆ keeping all information confidential and never interjecting personal opinions.

Scheduling an Interpreter:

- ◆ To locate and schedule an interpreter, visit www.rid.org. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) maintains a searchable database of freelance interpreters and interpreting agencies. The database is searchable by name, city, state, area code or zip code.
- ◆ Schedule as far in advance as possible. This will increase your chances of securing the best qualified interpreter for your situation.
- ◆ Be prepared to provide the date and time the interpreter is needed, the estimated length of session, the location of the event, the type of situation (i.e. meeting, interview, employee orientation), and the name(s) of the deaf or hard of hearing individual involved.
- ◆ Events of two or more hours in length will require two interpreters.

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART): With real-time captioning, a stenographer with special training records everything that is said. Simultaneously, the person who is deaf or hard of hearing reads the words delivered from the speaker on a laptop computer, a television monitor or a projection screen. CART can be used in venues such as conferences, live lectures and court rooms. You can locate a CART provider by accessing the National Court Reporter's Association *Professional Services Locator* at <http://cart.ncraonline.org/Directory/locator.htm>. Searchable by state, the database provides a list of CART providers, their certifications and credentials, areas of experience and contact information.

Video Relay Service (VRS): Video Relay Service allows a person who uses sign language to place a relay call to a hearing person by communicating through a certified sign language interpreter. VRS requires the use of a high-speed Internet connection and a web camera to place a call. A VRS call may be initiated by a person who uses sign language or by a hearing person to a sign language user. The interpreter will relay the conversation between the two parties. There is no cost to use VRS and you will not be billed for any calls made through the service. Video relay service is provided by telecommunication companies such as AT&T (www.attvrs.com) and Sprint (www.sprintvrs.com).

Worksite Assessments

Maryland businesses are able to obtain information about disability and employment issues through the Workforce & Technology Center (WTC), Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services. WTC's Worksite Accommodation Program provides on-site consultations that help businesses hire new employees and keep valued employees with disabilities on the job. WTC staff provide job site analysis as well as technical assistance about reasonable accommodations and assistive technology. WTC contact information is listed in the resources section of this fact sheet. Fees may apply for some services.

Resources

Braille Enterprises

Voice: (410) 612-1252
Email: sales@brailleenterprises.com
Website: www.brailleenterprises.com

DBTAC: Mid-Atlantic ADA Center

Voice / TTY: (800) 949-4232
Email: adainfo@transcen.org
Website: www.adainfo.org

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

Voice/TTY: (800) 526-7234
Email: jan@jan.wvu.edu
Website: www.jan.wvu.edu

Maryland Business Leadership Network

Voice: (866) 624-3502
Email: bln@suntrust.com
Website: www.usbln.com

Maryland Department of Disabilities

Voice / TTY: (410) 767-3660
Voice / TTY: (800) 637-4113
Email: mdod@mdod.state.md.us
Website: www.mdod.maryland.gov

Maryland Disability WorkFORCE Information Exchange

Voice: (301) 662-0099
TTY: (301) 662-4853
Email: info@mdworkforcepromise.org
Website: www.mdworkforcepromise.org

Maryland Technology Assistance Program

Voice: (800) 832-4827
TTY: (866) 881-7488
Email: mdtap@mdtap.org
Website: www.mdtap.org

National Center on Workforce and Disability/Adult (NCWD/Adult)

Voice/TTY: (888) 886-9898
Email: contact@onestops.info
Website: www.onestops.info

National Court Reporter's Association

Professional Services Locator
Website: <http://cart.ncraonline.org/Directory/locator.htm>

Office of Blindness & Vision Services

*Maryland State Dept. of Education
Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)*
Voice: (410) 554-9277 / (866) 614-4780
Email: obvs@dors.state.md.us
Website: www.dors.state.md.us

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

Voice: (703) 838-0030
TTY: (703) 838-0459
Website: www.rid.org

Services for the Visually Impaired

Voice: (301) 589-0894
Email: transcription@servicesvi.org
Website: www.servicesvi.org

Video Relay Services

AT&T: www.attvrs.com
Sprint: www.sprintvrs.com

Workforce & Technology Center Maryland State Dept. of Education Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)

Voice: (410) 554-9213 or 9351 / (888) 200-7117
TTY: (866) 881-7488
Website: www.dors.state.md.us/DORS/ForEmployers/MDWorkforceTechCenter/