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Reasonable Accommodations

Last Modified:



The Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) Reasonable Accommodations (RA) program removes workplace barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities from applying for employment and employees from performing essential job functions.

We provide services to two USDA Mission Area agencies—the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). We

also provide services to USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO).

USDA is committed to an inclusive workplace environment where individuals with disabilities can quickly and easily request and obtain reasonable accommodations.

Contact the MRP RA Program

Email Us at RArequest@usda.gov

Reasonable Accommodation Packets can be requested utilizing the following link: https://forms.office.com/g/ZDaGsq8V5q

Frequently Asked Questions

Expand All

What is a reasonable accommodation?

Any modification or adjustment to a job or change in the work environment that enables an applicant with a qualifying disability to compete equally for a position or an employee with a qualifying disability to perform the essential functions of the position. The accommodation must be job-related and not for personal use (for example, hearing aids, prosthetic devices, wheelchairs, and transportation to work).

Under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, a Federal agency is required to provide reasonable accommodations for a qualified individual with a disability, unless doing so would result in an undue hardship.

Examples of Accommodations

- Assistive technology
- Changes to the physical work environment
- Ergonomic assessments or devices
- Interpreter services
- Schedule modifications, flexible leave, and telework

- Personal Assistance Services
- Disability Parking

Who can request a reasonable accommodation?

Any employee (full-time, part-time, and probationary) or applicant with a qualifying disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), may receive a reasonable accommodation. Family members are not included in this coverage.

How do I request a reasonable accommodation (including Personal Assistance Services)?

An **applicant** or **employee** with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation at any time during the application process or during the period of employment.

A family member, union representative, healthcare provider, another employee, or anyone else the employee designates may make the request.

When an employee decides to request accommodation, the individual or representative must notify the supervisor or the Reasonable Accommodations staff. If the employee contacts the supervisor, the supervisor must notify the Reasonable Accommodations staff.

Requests for accommodations from applicants will be handled by Human Resources at the contact number listed on the vacancy announcement in conjunction with the Reasonable Accommodations staff.

The need for a reasonable accommodation is determined on a case-by-case basis, taking the following into consideration:

- The individual’s specific disability
- Existing limitations relative to the performance of a job function

- The essential duties of the job
- The work environment
- The feasibility of the proposed accommodation

Employees seeking Personal Assistance Services (PAS) will follow agency procedures for reasonable accommodations.

What is the reasonable accommodation and Personal Assistance Services process?

Below is an overview of the activities, responsible parties, and timelines involved in the process.

Activity/Requestor	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Applicant, employee, or representative makes an oral or written request for a reasonable accommodation (RA).	Selecting Official Supervisor RA Staff	Reasonable accommodation process begins immediately, but no more than 2 business days after the request. If request to supervisor, he or she forwards request to the RA staff.
Special circumstances in which it is necessary to expedite processing include: • Applying for a job • Where a specific agency activity is immediately scheduled to occur	Selecting Official Supervisor RA Staff	Expedite the processing of RA requests

Activity/Requestor	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Sends RA packet with forms and receives completed forms.	RA Staff	Sent within 2 business days
Return completed forms to the RA Staff.	Applicant Employee	10 business days Extension may be granted.
Receives and reviews documents. Notifies employee if additional documentation is needed from the appropriate source. If no additional medical documentation is needed, make decision on whether the employee has qualifying disability and issues Eligibility Letter to employee and a copy to the supervisor.	RA Staff	2 business days
Interactive process	Employee Supervisor Representative (if desired) RA Staff (if desired)	7 business days
After interactive process, provide or deny accommodation.	Supervisor Decision Maker	7 business days

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Do you offer training?

Employee and Managers Reasonable Accommodations Training sponsored by the Workplace Resolutions and Wellness Branch is available upon request. For more information, contact the MRP RA program at RArequest@usda.gov.

The following training sessions are available upon request:

- Medical Confidentiality
- Overview of the Reasonable Accommodations Process
- Hidden Disabilities

Personal Assistance Services

Personal Assistance Services (PAS) are services that help individuals who, because of targeted disabilities, require assistance to perform basic activities of daily living, like eating and using the restroom, and do not include, for example, performing medical procedures or medical monitoring.

PAS do not help individuals with disabilities perform their specific job functions, such as reviewing documents or answering questions that come through a call-in center. PAS differ from services that help an individual to perform job-related tasks, such as sign language interpreters who enable individuals who are hearing-impaired to communicate with coworkers, and readers who enable individuals who are blind or have learning disabilities to read printed text.

Disability Parking

- Employees who work in the DC offices may request disabled parking as an accommodation.
- Employees may request temporary (less than 90 days) or permanent disabled parking.
- Employees seeking disabled parking will follow agency procedures for reasonable accommodations.

Program Information and Services

MRP Reasonable Accommodations Program Brochure
USDA Reasonable Accommodations and Personal Assistance Services
USDA Reasonable Accommodations Frequently Asked Questions
USDA Technology & Accessible Resources Give Employment Today (TARGET) Center

Policies, Regulations, Laws, and References

MRP 4300-2: Directive

(PDF, 297.64 KB)

Reasonable Accommodations Program

DM 4300-2: Department Manual

Reasonable Accommodation Procedures

DR 4300-008: Departmental Regulation

Reasonable Accommodations and Personal Assistance Services for Employees and Applicants with Disabilities

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)
Rehabilitation Act
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) References

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) References

General

- EEOC.gov

- Questions and Answers on the Final Rule Implementing the ADA Amendments Act of 2008

Performance and Conduct

- Applying Performance and Conduct Standards to Employees with Disabilities

Veterans

- Understanding Your Employment Rights Under the Americans with Disabilities Act: A Guide for Veterans
- Veterans and the Americans with Disabilities Act: A Guide for Employers

Related Links

- Job Accommodation Network
- National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

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