



Working with Vision Loss

Your Rights in the Workplace

Employment doesn't need to stop just because your vision has changed. In the United States, your rights in the workplace are protected by federal laws and civil rights acts, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA.

These laws and regulations can help you keep your job by giving you the right to ask for and receive reasonable accommodations.

They also help protect you from discrimination when you're applying for a job. And they allow you to keep your disability private or make it known, as you choose.

Here are some of the basic details that can be helpful to know, whether you're looking for work or planning to stay in your job.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

The ADA is a federal civil rights law in the United States.

The ADA is designed to prevent discrimination and to enable people with disabilities to fully participate in all areas of the community.

Title I (1) of the ADA makes it illegal for employers to discriminate against people with disabilities. This includes all the following areas:

- The job application process
- Hiring
- Firing
- Wages
- Job training
- Benefits
- And more

This protection applies to all qualified people, both job seekers and current employees.

- A qualified person is someone who meets the requirements of a job, including skills, experience, and education, and who can perform the essential functions of the position

with or without reasonable accommodations.
(More information about reasonable accommodations follows.)

The ADA applies to employers with 15 or more employees, including state and local governments. It also applies to employment agencies and labor organizations.

The EEOC provides a helpful Q & A page, which you can find online if you google the phrase, “The ADA questions and answers.”

For a direct link to the webpage, check out the Resources for Hadley’s Working with Vision Loss workshops or contact a Hadley learning expert.

Reasonable Accommodations

“Reasonable accommodations” is a legal term used in the ADA.

This term describes changes to the job—or to the work environment—that an employer is expected to make.

These changes allow qualified applicants with disabilities to participate in the application process,

and qualified employees with disabilities to perform the job's required tasks.

Some examples of reasonable accommodations include:

- Rearranging your workspace
- Adapting equipment and devices
- Providing training materials and other documents in your desired format
- Adjusting your work schedule to include more breaks
- Assigning or promoting you to another available position in the company, where the required tasks are workable

Job Accommodations Network

You can learn more about the ADA and reasonable accommodations through the Job Accommodations Network (or JAN), which is a resource of the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).

JAN provides free, expert, and confidential guidance, such as one-on-one consultation about job accommodations, including:

- The accommodation process
- Accommodation ideas
- Product vendors
- ADA compliance assistance
- And other resources

The JAN webpage for Individuals includes information to contact JAN by phone, email, live chat, and more.

Go to askjan.org, and under the heading, **For Individuals**, you'll find helpful information, whether you're a job seeker or a current employee.

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Rehabilitation Counselors

Rehabilitation counselors are great resources to discuss your concerns and to learn about reasonable accommodations and the ADA.

To find a rehabilitation counselor near you, contact your local state agency for the blind or Department of Labor.