



INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES

Accommodation for the interview process must be requested by the individual. Employers cannot ask about a disability during the interview process. **If an applicant reveals a disability**, it is acceptable to question whether or not the individual could perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation. Use regular interviewing techniques as much as possible. The following are some suggestions to help make the interview process a comfortable experience for both the interviewer and interviewee:

- Maintain normal eye contact; sit down when speaking to someone in a wheelchair.
- Speak directly to the person with a disability, even if he/she is accompanied by another person, and don't discuss the disability of the applicant.
- Extend your hand for a handshake as you would normally. Do not be offended if someone with a physical disability does not shake back or offers the left hand or prosthesis as an alternative.
- Do not make assumptions about the severity of a disability or its limitations.
- Speak in a clear, normal tone of voice, unless the candidate requests otherwise.
- If you cannot understand what the candidate is trying to say, ask him/her to repeat it or, if appropriate, write the information.
- As with any candidate, do not end his/her sentences or hurry the interview along.
- If information such as a job description or organizational chart is provided during the interview, and a candidate reveals a vision impairment, ask if he/she would like the print enlarged. Offer to read the material if it cannot be enlarged or if it is not available in Braille.
- If leading someone with a visual impairment on a tour of the department or facility, describe the environment.

It is important that you focus on the essential functions of the position when conducting an interview. Remember to **avoid making assumptions**; a candidate may tell or show you how they can perform the functions that are necessary. Finally, remember to be consistent and relax. If you are comfortable, the candidate will be too and you should have a pleasant interview experience.