

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Rehabilitation Services
Reasonable Accommodations Guide

Reference: [RSM 2, Section 905](#)

This Guide is designed to assist DORS Counselors in addressing reasonable accommodations in employment. Reasonable accommodations can range from a modified work schedule to a heightened work station with space for a wheelchair to computer screen enlargement to a quiet workspace away from office traffic and noise.

Knowledge and facilitation of reasonable accommodations is part of the skill set that characterizes rehabilitation counseling and brings value to its practice. It is based on an understanding of disabilities in relationship to employment and knowledge of resources and assistive technology which are also key aspects of the counselor's skill set.

Note: While job coaching can be an important support for individuals with disabilities as they begin a new job, it is not considered to be a "reasonable accommodation" under the ADA. An employer would never be expected to provide or pay for job coaching services for an employee with a disability. DORS counselors should provide job coaching to consumers as they enter employment, as needed, according to established agency policy and procedures in [RSM 2, Section 800](#).

Talk with the Consumer

The counselor should start to think about reasonable accommodations and support needs from the time an individual applies for services, and should discuss such needs and their implications (e.g., disclosure of the disability) throughout the rehabilitation process.

Once a consumer secures a job, the counselor shall discuss reasonable accommodations with the consumer, including the following, as appropriate:

- Does the consumer want DORS to be involved in negotiating reasonable accommodations with the employer, or can the consumer handle this on their own?
- What are the job duties? Which responsibilities appear to require an accommodation?
- Does the consumer have an idea of what accommodation might enable them accomplish their work tasks?
- Does the requested accommodation seem "reasonable?" Is it likely to be something the employer could reasonably provide?
- Has the consumer actually requested the accommodation? If not, do they understand that requesting a reasonable accommodation requires disclosure, and often documentation, of the disability?
- Is the requested accommodation non-technical; that is, something the counselor can facilitate (e.g., modified work schedule, additional breaks)?
- Does the consumer need job coaching? If so, arrange per [RSM 2, Section 800](#).

Contact the Employer, as appropriate

With the agreement of the consumer and as necessary, the counselor should contact the employer to try to facilitate provision of reasonable accommodations and success on the job. The following script could be considered:

- “Hi, my name is _____, and I’m a vocational rehabilitation counselor with the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services. We assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining employment.”
- “I have been working with [CONSUMER] and understand that he/she has been hired by your business/organization as a [JOB TITLE]. I understand that he/she may need a reasonable accommodation in order to perform essential functions of the job.”
- “I would like to help facilitate clarification of whether a reasonable accommodation is needed and if so, which ones might work best. I’m hoping we can work together to help [CONSUMER] succeed on the job.”
- “Knowing the essential job functions will be important to the process. Would you provide a copy of the job description or a list of the essential functions of the job?”
- “Are you the contact person for considering reasonable accommodations at your company, or is there someone else we would need to be in touch with?”

Use Resources and Consultants

If there are questions about reasonable accommodations, a consumer’s specific circumstances, or the employer’s responsibilities under the ADA, DORS counselors shall consult with their unit supervisor to discuss the issue.

DORS Business Services Representatives and DORS Employment Specialists may also be of assistance in determining the most appropriate course of action for an individual consumer.

The [Job Accommodation Network](#) and [ADA National Network](#) are effective resources for DORS staff as well as the employer.

Additional ADA resources are available under the “Resources” tab on InDORS.

More Complex Accommodations Needed? Contact RTS

Rehabilitation Technology Services (RTS) at the Workforce & Technology Center offers consultation and worksite assessments to support success in employment for DORS consumers. When it appears that a more complex reasonable accommodation solution may be necessary, the counselor should make a referral to RTS.

The counselor is responsible for obtaining information about the request as indicated above (job duties affected, any suggested accommodation, employer contact information, whether the consumer has already requested an accommodation, etc.) prior to making a referral to RTS. Once the RTS referral is made through the authorization process, the counselor collaborates with RTS staff to achieve a solution acceptable to the consumer and employer which supports the employment success of the individual.