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Customized Solutions for Today's Workforce: The Job Accommodation Network

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Customized Solutions for Today's Workforce: The Job Accommodation Network

Abstract

[Excerpt] The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free and confidential consulting service for employers that expands employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities by providing:

- Individualized worksite accommodation solutions
- Technical assistance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability-related legislation

A service of the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), JAN also educates about self-employment and small business ownership opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Keywords

disability, accommodation, workplace adjustment, Job Accommodation Network, JAN

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CUSTOMIZED SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY'S WORKFORCE: THE JOB ACCOMMODATION NETWORK



The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free and confidential consulting service for employers that expands employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities by providing:

- Individualized worksite accommodation solutions
- Technical assistance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability-related legislation

A service of the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), JAN also educates about self-employment and small business ownership opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Providing employers with customized worksite accommodation solutions is at the core of JAN's mission. An accommodation is a modification to the work environment that enables a qualified individual with a disability to participate in the job application process, or perform the essential functions of a job, or equally benefit from the same employment opportunities and rights afforded similarly situated individuals without disabilities. For more than 20 years, JAN has been the primary resource for accommodation expertise, analyzing situations that span the complete range of disabilities and job functions and delivering effective solutions that benefit both employers and employees.

Employers, individuals with disabilities and rehabilitation professionals can all benefit from JAN's services. By providing guidance on practical accommodation options, JAN helps employers hire, retain and advance qualified individuals with disabilities. It can also help them reduce workers' compensation and other insurance costs and understand their legislative responsibilities. JAN benefits individuals with disabilities through accommodation assistance, legislative information and referrals to support services in their communities. Rehabilitation professionals may contact JAN for accommodation ideas and to locate local resources for workplace assessment and accommodation assistance.

■ TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE

1-800-526-7234 (V/TTY)

JAN provides these services over the telephone in both English and Spanish, Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST) and on Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., EST. When an individual calls JAN, an information assistant will first ask him or her to answer a few basic questions about the nature of the person's disability and job. This information helps determine which JAN consultant will handle the situation. JAN's consultants work in teams specializing in particular types of disabilities and accommodations. Each consultant has at least one advanced degree in a relevant field, such as vocational rehabilitation, psychology, special education, ergonomics, safety management or law.

The appropriate consultant will ask the caller for further information regarding the person's essential job functions and his or her functional limitations. JAN recommends accommodation solutions tailored to the person's needs and essential job functions. Consultants also can advise

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on implementation, such as how and where to obtain any necessary equipment, whether it be simple hardware or advanced technology that is needed. They may also provide follow-up printed materials via e-mail, fax and/or regular mail.

In addition to tailored worksite accommodations, JAN counsels on related issues such as interviewing and testing, policy modification, professional education and job-related travel.

■ ELECTRONIC ASSISTANCE

www.jan.wvu.edu

JAN also provides accommodation assistance through its Web site. Information is categorized by both topic and audience, and an **Accommodation Toolbox** centralizes all of JAN's accommodation resources, including downloadable fact sheets and other publications with accommodation ideas and expertise. A feature called **JAN by Disability A-Z** offers quick and easy access to all of JAN's information on a particular disability.

JAN's **Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR)**, located at *www.jan.wvu.edu/soar*, is an interactive Web tool that delivers customized job accommodation information by simulating the interaction users would have if they were speaking with a JAN consultant. The user is first asked to identify a particular impairment, limitation and job function from pre-set lists. Then, based on the user's responses, the system generates a list of potential accommodations, each one linked to a page with further information and resources, if appropriate. If an accommodation requires special equipment or technology, SOAR also provides guidance on how such products can be obtained.

Through its **Small Business and Self-Employment Service (SBSES)**, located at *www.jan.wvu.edu/sbSES*, JAN also provides advice and referrals to entrepreneurs with disabilities who are interested in starting their own business or exploring other self-employment options. SBSES provides information and resources on topics such as how to write a business plan, conduct market research, obtain financing, grow a business, manage personnel and finances, and market services and products. Guidance on self-employment issues such as health care, social security and working from home is also available.

JAN's Web site resources and phone consultation services help advance opportunities for not only qualified individuals with disabilities, but also the employers who benefit from their talents. As a result, JAN plays an important and unique role in contributing to the strength of the nation's workforce, economy and communities.

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