



THE REAL TRANSITION CHECKLIST

• **What's in Your Wallet?**

- Your student needs many of the same cards & identification you carry. For example: Every student should have their own bank account!
 - Personal ID card is vital to live in today's world
 - State ID's are available free of charge for people with disabilities and are good for ten years. For an application (that your doctor fills out), go to:
 - http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/pdf_publications/ds_d_x164.pdf. Or visit a State Drivers Services Facility in your area.
 - Also available is an Emergency Contact Database that lets state ID and driver's license cardholders, enter emergency contact information into a voluntary, secure database. This can help emergency personnel or law enforcement quickly reach a person's contacts. This emergency information is viewable by law enforcement ONLY and not for public use.

• **What Nobody Else Knows. . .Family Insight**

- Things you know about your student that will help ensure their success in the adult world. Record this information in one place so you can pass it on whenever your student starts a new venture.
- Example: When my student is stressed he/she needs _____.
- Go to www.equipforequality.org and click [Contact Us](#) for [Trainings on Disability Rights](#) to request the **Family Insight Checklist**.

- **Ways to Help Your Student Brainstorm About Who They Are, What They Want, and Where They are Going**

- Go to www.equipforequality.org and click [Contact Us](#) for [Trainings on Disability Rights](#) to request the **Student Brainstorming** worksheets & a workshop in your community.
- Have the student create a 'My Annoying List'- sometimes starting with what they don't like can be easier to pin down. It also open ideas about things they would like to change in their life, community, and the world.
- Assist your student to find an internship, volunteer or job opportunity to help determine what your student likes and what they are good at.
 - In Chicago: www.onesummerchicago.org offers over 24,000 opportunities for youth ages 14 – 24.
 - **Youth Volunteer Core**: www.yvc.org; works in communities to create volunteer youth teams to improve neighborhoods for everyone; check out the site to find if there is a YVC in your area for youth 11-18.
 - VolunteerMatch.org is a website where you can enter the city you'd like to volunteer in and find a list of opportunities and contact information.
 - www.serve.illinois.gov is the Americorps national service program and includes opportunities for students with disabilities to work in volunteer position that have a stipend; (great for resumes and may lead to paid employment; Phone 800.592.9896; TTY 217.557.4640.

- **How Changes to the Illinois Special Education Law Affect Transition**

- Go to the www.ISBE.state.il.us website; click *Programs* and then select *Special Education*.
- **Illinois Learning Standards link: Workplace Standards**

These standards can be used for goals in the transition IEP. For example: Under Workplace Skills/Science is the objective: SEEKING AND APPLYING FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES: Prepare a resume, Prepare for job interview, Write job application letter, Write interview follow-up letter, Complete job application form.

- http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/pdf/appendixd_workplace.pdf

- **Graduation**

- Your student can stay until the day before their 22nd birthday
- The options are:
 - Attend their graduation ceremony and accept a diploma- this ends all responsibility of the school to provide further educational services
 - Attend the graduation ceremony *without* accepting a diploma (ex: receive a certificate of attendance instead)- and continue to receive educational services up to the day before their 22nd birthday. Your student will receive a diploma after they complete the program
- More and more high school districts are developing programs for 18-21+ year old programs to support the transition from high school to the adult world. They are sometimes housed within a local community college. Check what is available within your district & within Illinois.
 - Community Based Transition Options is a guide to what should be included in these type of programs:
<http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/tran-cbto.pdf>.
 - The ARC has a Family Manual: Transition to Employment and Adult

Services for Youth with Developmental Disabilities in Illinois. Free to download: <http://www.hearcofil.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/FamilyManualTransitionNov302010FINALz.pdf>

- **Investigate Guardianship & Alternatives, such as Power of Attorney**
 - Family members believe or are often told by professionals that obtaining guardianship is necessary to make decisions for their student with a disability who is turning 18. In some cases, guardianship can be helpful and necessary. However, in many cases it is unnecessary, expensive and ineffective. Rather than help the problem, the legal process can make everyone's life more complicated.
 - Do some research on guardianship and alternatives and what would be best for your student, family and circumstances.
 - There are Powers' of Attorney for Healthcare, Finances & Education that can help you balance independence and protection for your student.
 - Go to www.equipforequality.org
 - An act called the **Delegation of Rights to Make Educational Decisions** allows a student, who is 18 years or older and their own guardian, to delegate their right to make decisions concerning their education to another person on the student's behalf. That person could be the parent(s), another family member or other adult. <http://www.equipforequality.org/learn/rights-information-by-topic-area/resources-special-education/>

- Students always have a right to raise issues at their IEP and transition planning meetings regardless of guardianship, power of attorney or delegation of rights.

- **Discuss Estate Planning for the Family**
 - Discuss your family's options in the area of Special Needs Trusts with an attorney who specializes in this type of law.
 - **The Special Needs Alliance**, or *SNA*, is a national network of lawyers in Disability & Public Benefits Law. Find resources & FAQ's at <http://www.specialneedsalliance.com>, Phone: 1.877.572.8472.
 - The **ARC of Illinois** has information & links to resources at www.thearcofil.org.
 - The Illinois Guardianship & Advocacy Commission is an executive state agency created to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities. Site includes questions and answers about guardianship & forms to download for free, including Powers of Attorney.
 - <http://gac.state.il.us/>

- **Investigate Social Security Benefits** at www.socialsecurity.gov
 - Benefits Planners work with individuals to help them calculate how working will affect benefits. **(Note: You will always make more money if you work and get benefits, than you would if you only receive benefits.)**
 - Throughout Illinois specialists are assigned by county and to find the right person contact:

- **Illinois Dept. of Human Services (Division of Mental Health)**

- **Phone: 866.390.6771, TTY: 312.814.5050**

OR

- **Illinois Dept. of Human Services (Division of Rehabilitation Services)**

- **Phone: 800.807.6962, TTY: 866.444.5013**

- If your student receives Social Security, you can become the Representative Payee to help your student handle their finances and income- this does not require having guardianship.
- Contact **Equip for Equality's Protection & Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security Project (PABSS)** about help removing barriers to becoming independent, including seeking employment, working with vocational rehabilitation and continuing adult education. For more information go to www.equipforequality.org or **Phone: 800.537.2632** or **TTY: 800.610.2779.**
- **PASS (Plan for Achieving Self-Support)** can help provide individuals with the opportunity to get a job & become self-supporting. A PASS plan can be used to pay for almost any expense that will help an individual become more financially independent.
 - Contact Mr. Karl Gillespie, PASS Specialist at
 - **Phone: 866.575.4889 or Fax: 312.575.6501.**

- **For Students with Developmental Disabilities (DD)**, contact the Independent Service Coordination agency (ISC) to conduct a Pre-Admission Screening.
 - The Pre-Admission Screening (PAS) is the starting place to receive appropriate adult services for people with DD.
 - Find the PAS office closest to you at www.dhs.state.il.us/officelocator.
 - This is also the place to sign up for PUNS (see below)
 - **PUNS** (Prioritization for Urgency of Need for Services) is a statewide database with information about people with developmental disabilities who potentially will be in need of services. It is vital to enroll your student in PUNS as soon as possible, so they can be on the waiting list for services as they become an adult.
 - For more information: www.dhs.state.il.us, **Phone: 888.DD.PLANS (888.337.5267) English or Spanish, TTY: 866.376.8446.**
- The **Division of Rehabilitation Services** is the state agency that provides vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities in Illinois. They also can help pay for college costs.
 - They should be part of an inter-agency agreement to be a partner of the team at transition IEP's – it's best if you request they be at transition planning meetings for vocational training & placement.
 - For more information about DRS services for youth with disabilities:

www.dhs.state.il.us, Phone: 312.814.4050, TTY: 888.440.8995.

- **Schools Need to Partner with Mental Health Providers (MH)** to ensure a smooth transition to the adult world for students with MH disabilities. Mental health services for young people are provided through a number of different state agencies and often through schools.
 - **Illinois Mental Health Collaboratives'** mission is to make it easier for people in need of mental health services to get the right care, at the right time, and in the right amount. **Phone: 866.359.7953 or TTY: 866.880.4454; website: <http://www.illinoismentalhealthcollaborative.com>**
 - **Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership:** statewide network of agencies and organizations to advance the goal of family support and leadership. **Phone: 312.516.5569; www.icmhp.org.**
 - **The Thresholds Institute** provides healthcare and housing for persons with mental illnesses in Illinois. For more information: **Phone 773.572.5400; e-mail: intake@thresholds.org; Website: www.thresholds.org.**
- **Campaign for Real Choice in Illinois** is a grassroots, citizen action organization. The campaign believes that people with disabilities want to live in their own place, control what happens in their lives and have flexible supports. www.realchoiceinIllinois.org.
 - **Illinois Association of Microboards and Cooperatives** project was introduced through the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities.

This is a customized person centered approach for individuals with disabilities across Illinois. "Microboards and Cooperatives are not places. A primary goal of each is to assist individuals to build quality lives in the community – not just to be **IN** the community but **OF** the community."

Key concepts:

- **Micro Boards**- A small, non-profit organization to provide natural and/or paid supports to one individual who has a disability.
- **Co-operatives**- People with similar interests' partner together, become incorporated and register with the state to become a certified service provider. This way they can direct and control their support service needs and benefit everyone in the co-op.

- More information at: www.iambc.org; 104 Woodcreek Court, Mahomet, IL 61853; 271.778.5388.

- **Consider Future Vocational Options & alternatives to sheltered workshops & day activity programs:**

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| ▪ Competitive employment | ▪ Micro-Enterprise |
| ▪ Supported employment | ▪ Job coaches |
| ▪ Self-employment | ▪ Family owned work co-ops |
| ▪ Customized employment | ▪ Volunteer opportunities |

To find out more:

- To look into career, business & self-employment options:
 - Small Business & Self-Employment Service, Office of Disability Employment Policy of the U.S. Department of Labor (part of the Job

Accommodation Network) at <http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/sbses>,
Phone: 800.526.7234, TTY: 877.781.9403.

- disabilityworks: Aims to Increase Economic Opportunities for People with Disabilities in the state of Illinois at www.disabilityworks.org.
 - Illinois Work Net- information for individuals seeking careers & employers at www.illinoisworknet.com.
 - Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)- State agency that provides vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities in Illinois: www.dhs.state.il.us under 'Rehabilitation'.
- **Employment Rights:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) — Became a civil rights law in 1990.
 - People with disabilities cannot be discriminated against at any time during the hiring process and on the job.
 - The employer needs to work with the person with a disability to find a workable job accommodation, that the employer pays for and that accommodation needs to be in writing.
 - For more information on employment rights and any questions or concerns you have— contact Equip for Equality at Phone: 800.537.2632 or TTY: 800.610.2779; our fact sheets are also available on our website: www.equipforequality.org.
 - **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)**. JAN provides specific by disability information on accommodations in educational & employment settings at-

<http://askjan.org> or **Phone: 800.526.7234; TTY: 877.781.9403.**

- **Continuing Education** at community, state & private colleges, & other adult learning programs.
 - Students with disabilities have a right to academic help & accommodations in post-secondary education, but your responsibilities are different after high school.
 - If you need help don't wait, put your request in writing following the rules in your student handbook, admission office or website.
 - Contact the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights at www.ed.gov/ocr, Phone: 800.421.3481, TTY: 877.521.2172.
 - For more information on post secondary rights and any questions or concerns you have— contact Equip for Equality at Phone: 800.537.2632 or TTY: 800.610.2779; our fact sheets are also available on our website: www.equipforequality.org.
 -
 - New programs are being created every year, so students who didn't have the choice of post-secondary education can enjoy the benefits.
 - Information & links:
 - www.thinkcollege.net
 - www.advocacyinstitute.org
 - Examples of post-secondary programs for students with cognitive disabilities in Illinois:

Chicago Community Colleges: College Connection to Career Development Opportunities for Minority Young Adults with Disabilities, 2 year inclusive, individual supported, Dr. Fabricio Balcazar, Phone: 312-413-1646, E-mail: fabricio@uic.edu

Elmhurst College--Elmhurst Life Skills Academy (ELSA), 4 year program--separate from the general college program; grants and loans are available. Nancy A. Cheeseman, M.A., LPC, Phone: 630-617-3752, E-mail: nancych@elmhurst.edu, **<http://www.elmhurst.edu/elsa>**

HEARTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE, Heartland Academy for Learning Opportunities (HALO); Normal, IL 61761; offers higher education opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities. Website: <http://www.heartland.edu/halo/>; Phone: 309.2688255; Contact Person: Anita Moore e-mail: anita.moore@heartland.edu, Phone: 309.268.8249.

Lewis & Clark Community College, Godfrey (by St. Louis): Offers A College for Life program for students who have had few inclusive experience in high school, Contact Martie Buck, Program Coordinator; Phone: 618.468.4217; e-mail: mbuck@lc.edu; or for the Supported College Transition Program: 618.468.4211; **<http://www.lc.edu/disability/>**

NATIONAL-LOUIS UNIVERSITY, Evanston: The PACE Program, inclusive 2 year, non-degree program for young adults with multiple learning disabilities. http://www.nl.edu/academics/PACE/pace_application.cfm, Phone: 800.443.5522, ext. 2670, FAX; 847.256.5190, email: cburns@nl.edu

John A. Logan and Southern Illinois University's OPTIONS TRANSITIONS TO INDEPENDENCE, Carbondale, IL 62901; Comprehensive transitional program that guides young adult students with learning disabilities into independent adulthood and helps them recognize and optimize their full potential. Website: www.experienceoptions.org/, Phone: 618.549.4201, e-mail: admissionsinfo@experienceOPTIONS.org; Contact Person: Char Reed, e-mail: Charlene.reed@experienceoptions.org.

- **Transportation:** In the greater **Chicago** area: **RTA ADA Paratransit Certification Services or Door to Door Services**
 - www.rtachicago.com (After July 1, 2006 Pace will be handling all Paratransit services)
 - www.pacebus.com, Phone: 312.663.HELP (4357), TTY: 312.913.3122
- **People With Disabilities Ride Free starting October 24, 2008**
 - Enroll in the Illinois Department on Aging Circuit Breaker's program- www.illinois.gov/transit or call 800.624.2459
- **Improving Public Transportation Options in your Community**
 - **Write letters** to your local, state and federal government representatives.
 - **Create a petition** calling for more public transportation – ask as many community members as possible to sign on – and give the petition to your government representatives.
 - **To find your elected representatives in state or federal government**, go to FirstGov.gov, the U.S. government's official web portal, at <http://www.firstgov.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml> or e-mail FirstGov@mail.fedinfo.gov or call 1-800-333-4636 (in Illinois, go to <http://www.ilga.gov/> and click on "Legislator Lookup"
 - **Contact APRIL – The Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living** – for more information on its advocacy for rural transportation. **APRIL**, 5903 Powdermill Rd., Kent, Ohio 44240, **Voice: 330-678-7648**, www.april-rural.org.
 - In 2006, **Easter Seals Project ACTION** initiated a project to increase the amount, cost-effectiveness and accessibility of transportation services available in small urban and rural communities for everyone. Information includes a year-long study, "**Transportation Services for People with Disabilities in**

Rural and Small Urban Communities." For more information, call **800.659.6428 (voice), 202.347.7385 (TTY); www.projectaction.org**

- The **Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities** gives grants to individuals and organizations to help improve the lives of people with disabilities and communities. For an information packet contact the Council's Springfield office at 217.782.9696; www.state.il.us/agency/icdd.
- See **Equip for Equality's** website for questions about Transportation Rights and to receive our materials on Paratransit and public transportation. www.equipforequality.org.
- **Community-based Recreation & Leisure activities beyond high school**
 - What clubs, groups, teams, volunteer opportunities & classes are young adults joining in your neighborhood? What does your student like to do? Special Recreation is only one option.
 - VolunteerMatch.org is a website where you can enter the city you'd like to volunteer in and find a list of opportunities and contact information.
 - www.serve.illinois.gov is the Americorps national service program and includes opportunities for students with disabilities to work in volunteer position that have a stipend; (great for resumes and may lead to paid employment; Phone 800.592.9896; TTY 217.557.4640.
 - **National Center on Accessibility:** Recreation, Parks, Tourism; www.ncaonline.org.
 - **Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service in the State**

of Illinois (AmeriCorps) National service program includes opportunities for people with disabilities to work in volunteer positions that have a stipend- (great for resumes and may lead to paid employment); Contact for Illinois: 535 W. Jefferson, 3rd Flr; Springfield, IL 62702; phone 800.592.9896; TTY: 217.557.4640; www.Serve.Illinois.gov

- **Job Accommodation Network**: Recreation, Sports & the Arts;
<http://askjan.org/links/disres.htm#Rec>
- Investigate the help that can be offered by **Assistive Technology (AT)**.
 - An AT evaluation can offer the student recommendations in the areas of augmentative communication, mobility, controlling the environment, recreation, computer access, etc.
 - **Equip for Equality's AT Project** handles cases having broad impact on major AT problems, including access to government services, schools and private businesses. Our work also includes technical assistance, advocacy and, in certain cases, representation to individuals with disabilities in such areas as Medicaid, Medicare, Special Education, Employment and Vocational Rehabilitation.
www.equipforequality.org/programs/assistivetechology/resources.php
 - **Illinois Assistive Technology Project** IATP is a state-wide non-profit agency that provides information & assistance, an AT device loan program, a low interest cash loan program, & AT trainings.

www.iltech.org, Phone/TTY in IL: 800.852.5110.

- **Infinitec**. Aims to advance independence and promote inclusive opportunities for children and adults through technology.
www.myinfinitec.org
- **Donka, Inc** A non-profit organization that provides no-cost computer training and job readiness services to persons with physical, visual and limited learning disabilities. 400 N. County Farm Road, Wheaton IL 60187
(Located *INSIDE* the DuPage Convalescence Center) **Phone: 630-665-8169, Fax 630-665-1669; www.donkainc.org**
- **United Cerebral Palsy Association**. UCP is a national organization dedicated to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society. www.ucp.org.
- **Computer Banc**. Computer Banc is a non-profit organization based in Springfield, IL that gives away refurbished computers for children with learning challenges who come from homes with limited income.
www.computerbanc.info,
**Phone: 217.528.9506, e-mail:
connect4kids@computerbanc.info.**

○ **General Legal Information**

- Check out **www.illinoislegalaid.org** where you can search by topic & get information & resources on disability related (and other consumer) legal issues.

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION or WANT TO REQUEST A FREE TRAINING?

Contact **Equip for Equality Phone: 800.537.2632 TTY: 800.610.2779**

Special Education Clinic: 866.Kids.046

Contactus@equipforequality.org

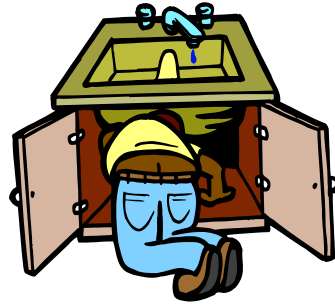
www.equipforequality.org

This resource material is intended as a guide for people with disabilities. Nothing written here shall be understood to be legal advice. For specific legal advice, an attorney should be consulted.

Home Experience

computer expert

home repairs



yard work



laundry

pets



helping

paying bills

making beds

cooking

cleaning

babysitting

sewing

grocery shopping

washing dishes



Volunteer Experience



school events

nursing home

pet shelter

family parties or reunions

library



neighborhood agencies



places of worship

community center

museums

hospitals recycle

parks



center for independent living zoo

homeless shelter

day care center

special event

fundraising (car wash)

donations



Paid Job Experience

call center

office

grocery store



theater

hospital

video store



computer work

gas station

fast food

music store

daycare

car wash

drugstore

department store

factory

housekeeping

camp counselor

newspaper route

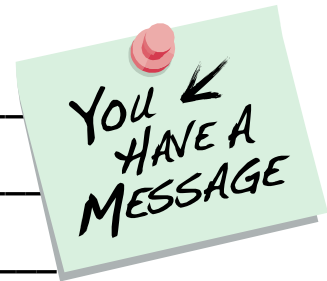
restaurant

gift shop

(What no one else knows): Family Insight

Share this information to help your student succeed

Communication Strengths



WOW's (Accomplishments this year at home, in the community & online)

Strategies for Learning and Motivators

In the Environment (likes & dislikes; light; sound; movement; colors; objects)

With New People and New Situations (how to approach; stresses; positives)

In the Community (likes; keeping safe; getting around)



Health & Wellness (new medication; mental health; allergies; new physical conditions)

In Group Situations (promote interactions)

Needs to Work On (organization, time management, problem solving)

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?

Contact Equip for Equality

Tel: 800.537.2632 TTY: 800.610.2779

www.equipforequality.org

This resource material is intended as a guide for people with disabilities. Nothing written here shall be understood to be legal advice. For specific legal advice, an attorney should be consulted.





Get Ready for Your Interview!

Tell me about Yourself

This is a typical interview get to know you question. Practice ahead of time by developing your own personal statement- just 3-5 sentences- that tells **who you are**, **your major strength** and **something positive you accomplished** on your last job, volunteer project or in your life. This makes you look professional, gets the interviewer's attention and interest. You'll separate yourself from your competitors and have a greater chance of being positively remembered and hired.

What are 3 of your career strengths?

1.

2.

3.



What would people who have worked with you say about you?

How would you solve a problem on the job?

This is a very common question at many interviews. Employers want to know that you have the skills to help their business run smoothly. This doesn't have to be hard to answer. Saying you would always tell your supervisor of any problem you couldn't solve on your own is a good general answer.



What is a skill you need to work on?

When asked this question, try to turn something that may sound negative into a positive that shows you are working on this skill.

For Example: *"Being organized wasn't my strongest point, so I created a daily checklist to mark off tasks and accomplishments and this has helped me be much more confident of my organization skills."*

Questions for You to Ask

Choose a few questions to ask at your interview. It shows you are interested in the job and are thinking about how it would be to work there. Examples:

1. What would a typical work day be like?
2. What is the most important responsibility for this job?
3. Can you describe the ideal candidate for this position?
4. Who will my boss be?
5. Where will I work?



6. What is the work schedule? Is it flexible?
7. What kind of benefits are there?
 - Health Insurance
 - Vacation Time
 - Bonuses
8. Who are the other people I will work with?
9. What opportunities for advancement are there at this company?
10. What would your employees say they like about working here?
11. What would the salary range be for this position?
Hint: It's OK to ask what the job pays, but don't make it your first or only question about the job.
12. Is this a new position? If not, what happened to the person who was working in this position?
13. When will I hear from you about your decision?

**Always thank the interviewer for their time
and let them know you want the job!**



Employment Rights (of people with physical, mental or sensory disabilities): *What Do You Need To Know?*

In Illinois, your employment rights are protected by the **Illinois Human Rights Act**. If you work for or interview with an employer that has 15 or more employees, you are also protected by the **ADA** (Americans with Disabilities Act). Under these laws, employers are not allowed to discriminate against you because of your disability. *However, these laws do not guarantee you a job because you have a disability.*

Before You Get the Job:

When you apply for a job, an employer can ask you many questions but may not ask about everything.

For example:

- An employer may *NOT* ask you about your disability
- An employer may *NOT* ask you about your health
- An employer may *NOT* ask you about medications
- An employer may *NOT* ask you if you have been in the hospital

These are ILLEGAL questions. Employers may ask you these questions *anyway*, even though the law says they cannot. You do not have to tell the employer about your disability, health, or medications. Equip for Equality has some suggestions which will help you protect your rights.

- **ON THE JOB APPLICATION:** If there is a question about your physical or mental abilities, do not answer it! Leave it blank!
- **DURING THE JOB INTERVIEW:** If an employer asks you an UNLAWFUL question (*or if they want to know why you did not answer an ILLEGAL question on the job application*), you should say:

"I do not answer questions about things that are private and not related to the job. I would be happy to discuss my qualifications for this job."

- **DURING THE JOB INTERVIEW:** *Have you not worked, because of your disability?* If an employer wants to know why you did not work for some time, you should say:

"I took time off from work to handle a private family matter."

This answer may satisfy an employer. Do NOT lie. Lying could result in losing your job. If they ask again, just tell them, *"I'm sure that you can understand that some things are private."* Then, talk about why you are qualified for that job!

This resource sheet is a guide to the Americans with Disabilities Act for people with disabilities. Nothing written here shall be understood to be legal advice. For specific legal advice an attorney should be consulted.

Physical or Medical Examinations:

The employer *CAN* ask you questions about your health and require medical examinations, but only **AFTER** the employer offers you a job, **BEFORE YOU START** the job, and only **IF IT IS REQUIRED FOR ALL NEW EMPLOYEES**. However, the employer *CANNOT* use any of this information to exclude you from the job if you can do the “essential functions” (important parts) of the job, with or without “reasonable accommodations.”

After You Start the Job:

Do you have to tell your employer about your disability after you start working? **NO!**

Can your employer ask about your disability after you start working? **NO!**

When do you tell the employer about your disability?

- You **never** have to tell the employer about your disability.
- **If you need assistance to do your job**, then you will need to tell the employer about your disability to get the assistance you need and why your disability requires this assistance. This assistance is called a “reasonable accommodation.” The employer can refuse to give you this assistance only if what you ask for is too expensive or difficult.

If you do need to ask for a reasonable accommodation, do it in writing!

In your letter, ask your employer to respond in writing. If they don’t write back, but agree to provide job accommodations to you, send a “Thank You” letter. This shows that they received your letter, acknowledged your disability, and have agreed to provide job accommodations (list what they have agreed to do). Keep copies of all letters!

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?

DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST?

Contact **Equip for Equality** (all services are free of charge):
1-800-537-2632 (voice) or 1-800-610-2779 (TTY)
contactus@equipforequality.org • www.equipforequality.org

If you have been discriminated against, do not wait! You must file your **complaint within 180 days** of the date on which you were discriminated against by an employer (the EEOC gives you 300 days). You do not need a lawyer to file a disability discrimination complaint with either the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) or the IDHR (Illinois Department of Human Rights).

- EEOC’s Illinois office: 312-353-2713 (voice) or 312-353-2421 (TTY)
- IDHR’s Chicago office: 312-814-6200 (voice) or 312-263-1579 (TTY)
- IDHR’s Springfield office: 217-785-5100 (voice) or 217-785-5125 (TTY)

This resource sheet is a guide to the Americans with Disabilities Act for people with disabilities. Nothing written here shall be understood to be legal advice. For specific legal advice an attorney should be consulted.

SAMPLE ACCOMMODATION REQUEST LETTER

Job Accommodation Network

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

<http://www.jan.wvu.edu>

The following is an example of what can be included in an accommodation request letter and is not intended to be legal advice.

Date of Letter

Your name

Your address

Employer's name

Employer's address

Dear (e.g. Supervisor, Manager, Human Resources, Personnel):

Content to consider in body of letter:

- Identify yourself as a person with a disability
- State that you are requesting accommodations under the ADA
- Identify your specific problematic job tasks
- Identify your accommodation ideas
- Request your employer's accommodation ideas
- Refer to attached medical documentation if appropriate*
- Ask that your employer respond to your request in a reasonable amount of time

Sincerely,

Your signature

Your printed name

Cc: to appropriate individuals

- You may want to attach medical information to your letter to help establish that you are a person with a disability and to document the need for accommodation.

What is JAN?

<http://www.jan.wvu.edu/>

The **Job Accommodation Network** is a service of the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) of the U.S. Dept. of Labor. JAN's mission is to facilitate the employment and retention of workers with disabilities by providing employers, employment providers, people with disabilities, their family members and other interested parties with information on job accommodations, self-employment and small business opportunities and related subjects. JAN's efforts are in support of the employment, including self-employment and small business ownership, of people with disabilities.

JAN's work helps:

Employers

- ▶ Hire, retain, and promote qualified employees with disabilities;
- ▶ Provide information on accommodation options and practical solutions;
- ▶ Become educated about their responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act;
- ▶ Reduce workers' compensation and other insurance costs; and
- ▶ Address issues pertaining to accessibility.

People with Disabilities

- ▶ Become educated about their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act;
- ▶ Acquire accommodation options; and
- ▶ Learn about other government and placement agencies.

Rehabilitation Professionals

- ▶ Facilitate placement of clients through accommodation assistance;
- ▶ Brainstorm accommodation options; and
- ▶ Find local resources for workplace assessment and discover resources for device fabrication and modification.

You can **contact JAN** and request consultation or information services by using the following methods. Please click on the preferred method and learn how we can help you.

▶ By Telephone

800-526-7234 (V/TTY) in the United States

800-ADA-WORK (V/TTY) in the United States

Calls are answered from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time Monday through Thursday and on Fridays from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Machines answer after-hours calls.

▶ By E-Mail

jan@jan.wvu.edu

▶ By Postal Mail

Job Accommodation Network, PO Box 6080, Morgantown, WV 26506-6080

This resource sheet is a guide to the Americans with Disabilities Act for people with disabilities. Nothing written here shall be understood to be legal advice. For specific legal advice an attorney should be consulted.

Sample Letter

Use this letter to ask for any disability-related help
(accommodation) from your employer

May 1, 2010

Mr. / Ms. _____ (Put name of manager here)

Company Name

Address here

Dear Mr. / Ms. _____ :

I have worked at _____ (Company Name) in the _____ Department since _____, 2003 and am writing to request that you provide _____ (list accommodation needed here) _____ as a reasonable accommodation. I have a disability, under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and need this accommodation to successfully do my job.

For more information about my rights and your responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act, I am enclosing a handout which explains this in more detail. You can also call either the Job Accommodation Network at 1-800-526-7234 or the Great Lakes Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center at 1-800-949-4232 for more information, free of charge.

If you have any questions about my request you can contact me in writing or by phone. However, I would appreciate a written response to this letter. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Your name

Your full address

Your phone number

SAMPLE LETTER

Use this letter to ask for a copy of your
personnel file from your employer

May 1, 2010

Put **name** and **address** of Director of Personnel or Human Resources here

Dear Mr./Ms. _____ :

I have been an employee of _____ (Company Name) since _____, 2008. I need a complete copy of my personnel record. Please let me know when I can pick up the copies or, if you prefer, please have the copies sent to my work site or mailed to my home address, listed below.

If you have any questions about my request you can contact me in writing or by phone. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Your name
your full address
your phone number



Keeping a Record When You Are Treated Unfairly

Keep a calendar, a notebook or computer file where you record anytime you've been treated unfairly.

Write down:

- The time, date, and where you were treated unfairly.
- The names of all the people who were there.
- Everything that happened.
 - Include quotes around anything you heard someone say and remember exactly and note who said it.

Example: George said, "You can not get special treatment in this department."

- Otherwise, write down what you heard in your own words.

Example: George told me I couldn't get special help on the job.

- The name of anyone who overheard or saw what happened (witnesses) and what you believe those people saw or heard.

Talk to those people and ask them if you can list them as witnesses in a complaint.

Keep a record of all papers you receive from those involved, such as:

- Notes—hand written
- Policies and procedures
- Memos or letters
- Reports or evaluations
- Files
- E-mails

**If you are worried about something a co-worker or supervisor did
OR if you want to be considered for a promotion or a new job.**

- Consider sending a letter to the appropriate person (supervisor, manager, human resource person, etc.)
 - Ask for a written response
 - If you want proof your letter was received, consider sending your letter by certified mail.

**Regularly review and copy your personnel file,
which is your right in Illinois.**

- See: <http://www.legis.state.il.us/legislation/ilcs/ch820/ch820act40.htm>

Contact **Equip for Equality** (all services are free of charge):
1-800-537-2632 (voice) or 1-800-610-2779 (TTY)
contactus@equipforequality.org • www.equipforequality.org

Where to File Employment Discrimination Claims

The following table provides general guidance. This is not a guarantee of coverage. Certain exceptions and limitations may apply. You may be able to file your claim with more than one agency. Please telephone an agency if you have questions.

Agencies to Contact	Chicago Commission on Human Relations	Cook County Commission on Human Rights	Illinois Department of Human Rights	U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Types of Discrimination Covered	Race Color Religion Sex (including sexual harassment) National Origin Ancestry Age Marital Status Disability Parental Status Sexual Orientation Source of Income Military Discharge Status Limited Retaliation Gender Identity	Race Color Religion Sex (including sexual harassment) National Origin Ancestry Age Marital Status Disability Parental Status Sexual Orientation Source of Income Military Discharge Status Housing Status Retaliation Aiding/Abetting Willful Interference Gender Identity	Race Color Religion Sex (including sexual harassment) National Origin Ancestry Age Marital Status Disability Unfavorable Military Discharge Military Status Retaliation Aiding/Abetting Willful Interference Coercion Arrest Record Citizenship Status	Race Color Religion Sex (including sexual harassment) National Origin Ancestry Age Disability Retaliation
Geographic Limitations	Violation occurred within the City of Chicago	Violation occurred within Cook County	Violation occurred within Illinois	Violation occurred within U.S. or at U.S. companies located outside U.S.
Time Limitations	Must file within 180 days of the alleged violation	Must file within 180 days of the alleged violation	Must file within 180 days of the alleged violation	Must file within 300 days of the alleged violation
Who Can Be Sued	Employers (no minimum number of employees) Labor Organizations Employment Agencies Individuals	Employers (no minimum number of employees) Labor Organizations Employment Agencies Individuals	Employers with at least 15 employees Employers with at least 1 employee for disability, sexual harassment, public contractors, state and local government units or apprenticeship /training programs Labor Organizations Employment Agencies Individual sexual harassers	Employers with at least 15 employees for Title VII and ADA claims, with at least 20 employees for ADEA, and with at least 1 employee for Equal Pay Act, state and local governments and educational institutions Labor Organizations Apprenticeship/Training Programs Employment Agencies

This resource sheet is a guide to the Americans with Disabilities Act for people with disabilities. Nothing written here shall be understood to be legal advice. For specific legal advice an attorney should be consulted.

Agencies to Contact	Chicago Commission on Human Relations	Cook County Commission on Human Rights	Illinois Department of Human Rights	U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Kinds of Relief Available	<p>Make whole damages (such as back pay, lost benefits and emotional distress damages)</p> <p>Punitive Damages</p> <p>Other Damages (such as interest)</p> <p>Injunctive Relief (such as reinstatement)</p> <p>Fines to The City</p> <p>Attorneys Fees for prevailing complainant</p>	<p>Make whole damages (such as back pay, lost benefits and emotional distress damages)</p> <p>Punitive Damages</p> <p>Other Damages (such as interest)</p> <p>Injunctive Relief (such as reinstatement), including emergency relief</p> <p>Fines to the County</p> <p>Attorneys Fees for prevailing complainant</p>	<p>Make whole damages (such as back pay, lost benefits and emotional distress damages)</p> <p>Other Damages (such as interest)</p> <p>Injunctive Relief (such as reinstatement and barring contracts with the State), including emergency relief</p> <p>Attorneys Fees for prevailing complainant</p>	<p>Make whole damages (such as back pay, lost benefits and reinstatement)</p> <p>Compensatory Damages</p> <p>Punitive Damages</p> <p>Injunctive Relief, including emergency relief</p> <p>Attorneys Fees for prevailing complainant</p>
Agency Contact Information	<p>Chicago Commission on Human Relations</p> <p>740 N. Sedgwick, Third Floor Chicago, IL 60610 (312) 744-4111 (312) 744-1088 (TDD) (312) 744-1081 (FAX)</p>	<p>Cook County Commission on Human Rights</p> <p>69 W. Washington St. Suite 2900 Chicago, IL 60602 (312) 603-1100 (312) 603-1101 (TDD) (312) 603-9988 (FAX)</p>	<p>Illinois Department of Human Rights James R. Thompson Center 100 W. Randolph Suite 10-100 Chicago, IL 60601 (312) 814-6200 (312) 263-1579 (TDD) (312) 814-1541 (Fax)</p>	<p>U.S. Equal Employment Oppor. Comm'n Chicago District Office</p> <p>500 W. Madison, Suite 2800 Chicago, IL 60611-2511 (312) 353-2713; 2714 (312) 353-2421 (TDD) (312) 353-7355 (Fax)</p>
Office Hours	<p><u>Filing Hours:</u> Monday through Friday 9:00 - 5:00 (2 copies of all filings required)</p> <p><u>Intake Hours:</u> Monday through Friday 9:00 - 5:00</p>	<p><u>Office Hours:</u> Monday through Friday 8:30 - 5:00</p> <p><u>Intake Hours:</u> Monday through Friday 8:30 - 5:00</p>	<p><u>Office Hours:</u> Monday through Friday 8:30 - 5:00</p> <p><u>Intake Hours:</u> Monday through Thursday 8:30 - 5:00</p>	<p><u>Office Hours:</u> Monday through Friday 8:30 - 5:00</p> <p><u>Intake Hours:</u> Monday through Friday 8:30 - 12:00 1:00 - 3:30</p>
Other Forms of Discrimination Covered	<p>Housing Public Accommodations Credit and Bonding Transactions</p>	<p>Housing Public Accommodations Credit Transactions</p>	<p>Housing Public Accommodations Credit Transactions Sexual Harassment in Higher Education</p>	

This resource sheet is a guide to the Americans with Disabilities Act for people with disabilities. Nothing written here shall be understood to be legal advice. For specific legal advice an attorney should be consulted.