



ADA TODAY



Newsletter

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WHAT'S NEW AT ODR:

Would your organization benefit from training on disability-related issues? If so, ODR has the resources you need! Our office provides ADA Title I (Employment) and Title II (Government Accessibility) training, as well as training on effective communication for people with disabilities, web accessibility, and disability sensitivity. If you would like to know about our upcoming trainings or would like to schedule training for your agency, please contact Jessica L. Hunt at Jessica.Hunt@dc.gov or 202-727-0287.

ADA 101: DISABILITY DISCLOSURE

(Resources: Job Accommodation Network, www.askjan.org; Office of Disability Employment Policy, www.dol.gov/odep).

Every job seeker with a disability is faced with the same decision: "Should I or shouldn't I disclose my disability?" This decision may be framed differently depending upon whether you have a visible disability or a non-visible disability. Ultimately, the decision of whether to disclose is entirely up to you.

Why Disclose in the Workplace?

In order to benefit from the ADA, you must disclose your disability. An employer is only required to provide work-related accommodations if you disclose your disability to the appropriate individuals.

When to Disclose Your Disability

There is no one "right" time or place to disclose your disability. Select a confidential place in which to disclose, and allow enough time for the person to ask questions. Do not dwell on the limitations of your disability. You should weigh the pros and cons of disclosure at each point of the job search, recruitment, and hiring process and make the decision to discuss your disability when it is appropriate for you. Consider the following stages:

- In a letter of application or cover letter;
- Before an interview;
- At the interview;
- In a third-party phone call or reference;
- Before any drug testing for illegal drugs;
- After you have a job offer;
- During your course of employment; or
- Never.

How to Disclose your Disability

Preparation is essential for disclosing your disability. Effective disclosure requires that you discuss your needs, and that you provide practical suggestions for reasonable job accommodations, if they are needed. One way to become comfortable with discussing your disability is to find someone you trust and practice the disclosure discussion with that person. The two of you can put together a disclosure script. It should contain relevant disability information and weave in your strengths. Always keep it positive!

What to Disclose About Your Disability

There is no required information to share about your disability. In fact, it will be different for everyone. For example, if you have an apparent disability it is often beneficial to address how you plan to accomplish tasks required by the job. This can affirm to the employer that you are suited for the position. Additionally, by demonstrating your own ease and comfort with the job requirements, you can relay to employers other traits that are desirable in an applicant. A person with a hidden disability, on the other hand, will first need to decide whether to disclose the disability, and subsequently determine what information to share about the disability. Generally, if you choose to disclose, it is most helpful to share the following:

- General information about your disability;
- Why you are disclosing your disability;
- How your disability affects your ability to perform key job tasks;
- Types of accommodations that have worked for you in the past; and
- Types of accommodations you anticipate needing in the workplace;

To Whom to Disclose Your Disability

Disclose your disability on a "need-to-know" basis. Provide further details about your disability as it applies to your work-related accommodations to the individual who has the authority to facilitate your accommodation request. Consider disclosing to the supervisor responsible for the hiring, promoting, and/or firing of employees. This person needs to be informed of your disability-related needs to provide the necessary supports and judge your job performance fairly.

Disclosure Protections and Responsibilities

As a person with a disability, you have disclosure protections as well as significant responsibilities to yourself and to your employers.

You are entitled to:

- Have information about your disability treated confidentially and respectfully;
- Seek information about hiring practices from any organization;
- Choose to disclose your disability at any time during the employment process;
- Receive reasonable accommodations for an interview;
- Be considered for a position based on your skill and merit; and
- Have respectful questioning about your disability for the purpose of determining whether you need accommodations and if so, what kind.

You have the responsibility to:

- Disclose your need for any work-related reasonable accommodations;
- Bring your skills and merits to the table; and
- Be truthful, self-determined, and proactive.

DC NEWS AND INFORMATION

Prestigious National Award Goes to D.C. Librarian

(Washington, DC) – The prestigious Carnegie Corporation of New York and New York Times "I Love My Librarian" award goes to D.C. public librarian Venetia V. Demson. Demson is one of 10 librarians in the country and the first in this region to receive this annual award.

As head of the DC Public Library's Adaptive Services Division of the DC Public Library, which assists the deaf and visually impaired communities access library services, has spearheaded such signature programs as the Braille Book Club and American Sign Language classes. Additionally, Demson's area uses adaptive technologies to assist library users in independently locating and using library resources. Demson's nominator describes her work as, "What a library should be – a safe haven for all and a portal to the resources we all need to enrich our lives."

Forty librarians nationwide have won the I Love My Librarian award since 2008. Each honoree was recognized at a ceremony and reception in New York, hosted by The New York Times.

"Venetia brings an unparalleled passion to her work as an advocate and as a librarian," said Ginie Cooper, chief librarian of the District of Columbia. "Because of her leadership, the DC Public Library is a model for serving deaf, visually impaired, and physically disabled users. We are very proud to have her as a colleague."

This year's winners include an innovator who integrates technology throughout her school for improved collaboration among students and teachers, and a business outreach librarian who creates a space for the unemployed and local business community to learn new skills, network and collaborate.

Nominations were open to librarians working in public, school, college, community college and university libraries. The award is a collaborative program of Carnegie Corporation of New York, The New York Times and the American Library Association. More information about the award recipients is available at www.atyourlibrary.org/ilovemylibrarian.

Dance/Music Adaptive Clinic with Chris Collins Dance Studio and Mayzsoul Inc. Dream for Kids is partnering with Chris Collins Dance Studio in Alexandria and Mayzsoul Inc. to present Extreme Recess: Dance & Music. This event will be hosting a day of dance and music for children with physical and developmental disabilities by providing lessons and an encouraging atmosphere. Children will learn salsa and hip hop dances, as well as play musical instruments! TO REGISTER: <http://extremerecessdancemusic.eventbrite.com/>!

Be Mine Torte Design: On Sunday, February 12th: Carmine's DC and Dreams for Kids are hosting the first annual Be Mine Buffet and Valentine Torte Design event! Let your child's inner baker SHINE through! Each child will receive a chocolate torte to decorate and then bring home as a special valentine's day gift! A portion of proceeds that day will go back to Dreams for Kids! Adults can grab a discounted \$25 buffet ticket, but all children eat FOR FREE! For those who would like to attend as volunteers and help our children decorate their tortes, please purchase a \$25 ticket. For more details and to register please visit: <http://dfkvalentinesevent.eventbrite.com/>

DC Wing Bowl: On Sunday, March 25th: Come out to District in Adams Morgan to support Dreams for Kids, enjoy the NCAA March Madness, and eat as many chicken wings as you can at the third annual Wing Bowl. District will be serving up five different flavors of wings to contestants who will be competing to raise money for the Dreams for Kids Extreme Recess program. Entry into the competition is \$40 and covers as many wings as you can eat, water and soda, and a donation to Dreams for Kids. Contestants are encouraged to raise as much as they can; there will be prizes awarded for most wings eaten, as well as

most money raised. Guests are encouraged to come out and cheer on the contestants and will receive \$0.50 wings, \$4 beers and rail drinks, and \$12 six beer buckets. TO REGISTER: wingbowldistrict.eventbrite.com. District will be donating a percentage of the bar to Dreams for Kids so come hungry and thirsty. To sign up or with any questions, please contact Garrett Asta at garrettasta@gmail.com.

DC SIBS: New DC Group for Adult Siblings of People with Disabilities: DC now has a chapter of the Sibling Leadership Network (SLN). SLN is a national network of state chapters which provide siblings of individuals with disabilities the information, support, and tools to advocate with their brothers and sisters and to promote the issues important to them and their entire families. All interested individuals are encouraged to visit the DC Sibs' meet-up page to learn about future events: www.meetup.com/DCsibs. If you have any questions please email DCsibs@gmail.com.

UPCOMING DISABILITY-RELATED EVENTS

Northeast ADA Center Webinar: Minding Your Business: Engaging People with Learning, Psychiatric, and Cognitive Disabilities in the Workplace Better diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric, learning, and cognitive disabilities, coupled with the understanding that these disabilities are not character flaws, but brain disorders, have resulted in many more people with these disabilities being in the labor market than was the case just a decade ago. Thus, the workplace inclusion of these individuals presents a relatively new dilemma for many employers. This webinar will: • Facilitate awareness of different types of psychiatric, learning, and cognitive disabilities • Enhance understanding of the facts and myths around these types of disabilities • Make the business case for creating a workplace that is welcoming and accommodating to people with these disabilities • Provide resources for identifying possible workplace accommodations • Explore best practices for engaging people with these types of disabilities in the workplace • Consider factors related to organizational cultures that help facilitate acceptance of people with these disabilities. Project: [Northeast ADA Center](#).

JAN Announces a New Series of Just-in-Time Training Modules The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) announces the first in a series of fully-accessible training modules. The first just-in-time module features "JAN's Interactive Process." With the passage of the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, employers have moved past the definition of disability and on to providing accommodations. The key to successful accommodations is having an effective interactive accommodation process. This 23 minute training module and accompanying transcript and handout provides a sample step-by-step process that employers can use in their own workplaces to help them successfully accommodate applicants or employees.

This module can be used to train new accommodation specialists, disability managers, and others responsible for initiating and maneuvering through the accommodation landscape. Trainees can view the module at their computer or use the module as part of a larger training.

The Module and supporting documents can be found in JAN's Multimedia Training Library at: <http://AskJAN.org/training/library.htm>.



For Information about ODR's Newsletter call 202-724-5055 or visit the web at odr.dc.gov.



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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the District Office of Disability Rights (ODR) is to ensure that the programs, services, benefits, activities and facilities operated or funded by the District of Columbia are fully accessible to, and useable by people with disabilities. ODR is committed to inclusion, community-based services, and self-determination for people with disabilities. ODR is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the City's obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as well as other disability rights laws.