



How job coaches make a difference

“Supported employment played three important roles—as broker, as guide, and as troubleshooter—and this influenced employers’ willingness to collaborate.”

Gustafsson, Peralta, & Danermark, 2013

“An employer may be required to allow a job coach paid by a public or private social service agency to accompany the employee at the job site as a reasonable accommodation.”

US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

Job Coaches as Accommodations

As a job coach, you can play a pivotal role in supporting job seekers and employees with disabilities. In addition, you can support and educate businesses on behalf of a talent pool. For example, you can assist an employee to learn job duties, create strategies for organizing and completing tasks, and acclimate to the workplace.

Job coaches often report employers who do not permit job coaches in the workplace, including in the interview process. A blanket “no job coach allowed” policy eliminates an entire class of reasonable accommodations and may unnecessarily exclude job seekers with disabilities. In fact, a job coach as a reasonable accommodation is a legally protected right in most situations, unless the employer can demonstrate that this would cause an undue hardship.

Guiding employers: The reasonable accommodation process

- The EEOC recommends that employers use an *interactive process*, which simply means that employers and employees with disabilities work together to come up with accommodations.
- As a job coach, you can support the job seeker/employee in making the accommodation request by providing information about the need for the accommodation. You can also provide support around exploring, choosing, and implementing the accommodation.
- Use words like *productivity enhancer* or *productivity tool* when explaining your job coaching role. Help the business understand what value the employee adds to the business, and how your supports and services can enhance employee productivity.
- Educate yourself and the business. Think of your ADA expertise as a tool in your business engagement toolkit. You can offer training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to the business.

What if an employer denies a job coach as an accommodation?

- If you think a job seeker or employee you support has been discriminated against in employment due to their disability, as always, discuss the situation with the person you support.
- To file a complaint, it is best to contact the EEOC promptly. See www.northeastada.org/resource/how-to-file-a-complaint and www.eeoc.gov/contact-eeoc