
PARDON AND PAROLE BOARD
Policy and Procedure Manual

Policy 121 – Reasonable Accommodation

POLICY

It is the policy of the Pardon and Parole Board (PPB) to ensure an inclusive workplace. The PPB supports and complies with state and federal laws, which mandate reasonable accommodation be provided to qualified applicants and all employees with a disability or disabilities, so that they have equal access to the application process, are able to perform the essential functions of the position held or desired, and have benefits and privileges of employment equal to those of non-disabled individuals. The PPB recognizes its obligation to apply terms and conditions of employment equitably. Further, the PPB requires all employees, including employees with disabilities, to adhere to PPB policies, including employment policies regarding conduct and performance. The PPB recognizes and respects the rights of individuals with disabilities to be gainfully employed. Accordingly, it is the intent of the PPB to provide reasonable accommodation to employees and applicants with disabilities unless to do so would cause an undue hardship.

For the purpose of this policy, the following terms mean:

"Essential Functions" means those job duties so fundamental to a particular position, that an individual cannot accomplish the purpose of the job without performing them. Determination of essential job functions of a position is done on a case-by-case basis to reflect the job as it is actually performed.

"Major Life Activities" means the activities an average person can perform with little or no difficulty. Major life activities include, but are not limited to:

- seeing (vision);
- hearing;
- walking;
- breathing;
- performing manual tasks;
- learning;
- caring for oneself;
- concentrating;
- lifting;
- operation of major bodily functions (e g., including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions);
- working.

“Individual with a Disability” means a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or has a record of such an impairment.

“Medical Information” means any knowledge of or documentation of a medical condition. Other examples include, but are not limited to, medical diagnoses; letters or forms from an employee's medical doctor, psychologist, or other health care provider; medications; and information volunteered by an employee.

“Qualified Individual with a Disability” means an individual with a disability who: a) satisfies the skill, experience, education, and other requirements related to the job for which he or she applies or holds, and b) is able to perform the essential functions of the particular job with or without reasonable accommodation.

“Reasonable Accommodation” means any change in the work environment or adjustment in the manner a task is normally performed which enables a qualified individual with a disability to have equal access to the application process, be able to perform the essential functions of the position held or desired, and have benefits and privileges of employment equal to those of non-disabled individuals. Reasonable accommodation(s) may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Making the physical work environment accessible to and usable by a person with disabilities.
- Modifying a job so a person with a disability can perform the essential functions of the job. This may involve eliminating non-essential elements or changing procedures.
- Acquiring or modifying equipment or devices.
- Providing qualified readers or interpreters.
- Reassigning or referring an employee with a disability to a vacant position, if attempts at other suggested or recommended methods of reasonable accommodation have failed.

(Note: The agency is under no obligation to create a position for an employee with a disability or promote or transfer an employee into a position for which he or she is not qualified. Additionally, the PPB has no obligation to provide training for an employee to enable the individual to gain the requisite education and skills necessary to qualify for a vacant position.)

In accordance to the American Disability Amendments Act regulations, reasonable accommodation may be provided to persons with disabilities. However, reasonable accommodation will not and is not required to be provided to persons who have been "regarded as" having a disability.

“Undue Hardship” means a significant difficulty or expense for the PPB, which could result if it provided a specific type of accommodation. Determination of undue hardship is made on a case-by-case basis, considering several factors, including:

- the impact of the accommodations on the individual facility as well as the PPB operations and delivery of services; and
- the nature and cost of the reasonable accommodation(s).

The PPB is not obligated to provide an accommodation if it would result in undue hardship.

Applicants

The PPB shall advise applicants through the job posting that reasonable accommodation to individuals with disabilities may be provided upon request. The PPB shall coordinate arrangements for reasonable accommodation requests of applicants. An applicant shall not be asked whether he or she is disabled. An applicant shall not be asked questions whether he or she is able to perform the essential functions of a position only if all applicants are asked identical questions. Should an applicant voluntarily indicate the presence of a disability, follow-up questions regarding reasonable accommodation may be pursued.

A qualified applicant shall not be denied employment based upon a request that a reasonable accommodation be provided in the application or interview process. In situations where a conditional or tentative job offer is extended to an applicant and the agency determines it is unable to reasonably accommodate the individual in performing the essential functions of the position, then the offer of employment shall be rescinded.

Employees

An employee who believes he or she has a disability and is in need of reasonable accommodation is responsible for providing notification to their supervisor who will then notify the Deputy Director.

This notice may come directly from the employee or it may be communicated through a third party (e.g., health care provider, family member or friend) on the individual's behalf. Each request for reasonable accommodation shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The Deputy Director shall direct employees who believe they are in need of reasonable accommodation to complete and submit the appropriate PPB Reasonable Accommodation Request Form to initiate a request.

The employee and Deputy Director shall discuss and identify the type of reasonable accommodation(s) the employee needs, including acceptable alternatives. The PPB reserves the right to request additional medical documentation when necessary to determine the existence of a disability, determine the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the position involved, and assist in determining an appropriate reasonable accommodation.

The PPB shall notify the employee in writing of the determination. The employee shall inform the Deputy Director of the decision to accept or reject the reasonable accommodation offer in writing within five (5) working days of the determination. If the employee rejects the reasonable accommodation, he or she shall state why the proposed reasonable accommodation is not suitable.

The PPB shall notify appropriate personnel of the employee's decision to accept or reject the reasonable accommodation.

Factors, including the following, shall be considered before making a final determination concerning reasonable accommodations: (1) the type of reasonable accommodation(s) requested; (2) the type of reasonable accommodation(s) offered to employees in similar circumstances; (3) the alternative

reasonable accommodation(s); (4) the availability and cost of the needed service or item necessary to effect the reasonable accommodation(s); and (5) whether or not providing the accommodation(s) would cause significant disruption of the operations.

If a temporary medical condition limits an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of his/her job, the PPB shall be consulted to make a determination whether a reasonable accommodation is necessary.

An employee who disagrees with the reasonable accommodation determination may file an appeal to that decision with the Executive Director. Appeals must be filed in writing within five (5) working days of receiving notice of the determination. The PPB Executive Director's decision on the reasonable accommodation appeal shall be final.

Confidentiality

The PPB shall keep confidential any medical information it learns about an employee or job applicant, regardless of whether the employee is a qualified individual with a disability. The PPB staff shall keep confidential the fact of an employee receiving a reasonable accommodation.

Information and reasonable accommodation may be disclosed in the following circumstances:

- to supervisors or managers who need to meet the employee's need for reasonable accommodation(s) or in connection with an employee's work restrictions;
- to first aid or safety personnel in cases where an employee's condition may require emergency treatment or where an employee would require assistance in the event of an emergency;
- to government officials investigating compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act or similar federal or state laws;
- as needed for workers' compensation purposes;
- as needed for insurance purposes.

All medical records pertaining to the reasonable accommodation request shall be maintained in a separate file with personnel records. An employee who believes that the confidentiality of his/her medical information and/or reasonable accommodation has been violated may file a complaint with the PPB in compliance with the procedures set forth in Employee Manual.

References: Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and 25 O.S. §§ 1101, et seq.

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