Employee Procedures to Request Reasonable Accommodation

Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (ODEO)
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https://eo.arc.nasa.gov/

What is Reasonable Accommodation (RA)?

An adjustment made to nonessential job requirements and/or any change in the work environment enabling a qualified person with a disability to perform the essential duties of the job to which she/he is assigned.

An adjustment made to a job application process to permit an individual with a disability to be considered for a job (such as providing application forms in alternative formats like large print or Braille).

An adjustment that enables employees with disabilities to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment (such as removing physical barriers in an office or cafeteria).

RA’s also include travel accommodations, other than coach class or other travel upgrade due to disability or special need.

Examples of reasonable accommodations include:
- Modifications to work schedules
- Equipment or devices
- Creating accessible facilities
- Providing readers or interpreters, etc.

Reasonable accommodation SHOULD be provided without altering the position description or causing undue hardship to the agency. As outlined in NASA Interim Directive (NID) 9700.103, all requests for travel accommodations seeking other than coach class due to disability or special needs should follow RA procedures in accordance with NPR 3713.1B.

Reasonable accommodation WILL enable an individual with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities.

Types of Disabilities

A disability is a physical or mental impairment that (1) substantially limits one or more major life activity(s), (2) there is medical record of the impairment or (3) the person is regarded as having such impairment. Examples include but are not limited to:
- Mobility/Motor Skills Impairments
- Vision Impairments
- Hearing Impairments
- Cognitive Impairments
- Mental Health Impairments

Other Impairments: Chronic conditions or long-term illness such as asthma, heart disease, HIV, chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), or any other physiological disorder or condition.

Confidentiality

Information obtained in connection with the RA process must be kept confidential. Confidential information sharing to other agency officials is only permissible when there is a NEED TO KNOW in order to make a determination on a RA request or to assist the Decision Maker (DM) with making a determination.

Employee Procedures for Requesting RA

STEP 1: RA request is made directly to the individual’s IMMEDIATE Supervisor (Decision Maker-DM). It is recommended that the individual review NASA Procedural Requirements (NPR) 3713.1B, Reasonable Accommodations Procedures for Individuals with Disabilities.

RA request may be oral or in writing, including email transmission. If initially received orally, by email, or written statement individual must also submit RA on NASA Form 1699. All employee requests for RA must be on NASA Form 1699. RA request may be made by individual or third party. The DM should transfer information provided from an oral or email request to NASA Form 1699 or provide employee with NASA Form 1699 for completion no later than five (5) calendar days of initial request made in any other format than on NASA Form 1699.

Processing shall begin immediately upon receipt of the initial RA request from the employee. Requests for reasonable accommodation must be processed and finalized within 30 calendar days, unless there are extenuating circumstances. The time limit will pause if medical information is deemed necessary to make a determination, and will resume upon receipt of medical documentation. The employee may make a request for RA to any member of Center management or ODEO Staff.

The employee should not attempt to circumvent or complicate the process by deliberately or willfully submitting the request to someone other than the appropriate DM.

STEP 2: DM shall contact the Center Disability Program Manager (DPM) in the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) to provide notification of the
individual’s RA request and forward a copy of the completed NASA Form 1699.

STEP 3: As appropriate, the DM will consult with the RA Team to discuss the individual’s RA request, types of available accommodations, and other accommodation resources. The RA Team may include the DPM, ARC Physician, EAP, Facilities Specialists, IT Specialists, HR Benefits Specialists, HR Staff, and/or Chief Counsel’s Office. Medical information may be deemed necessary to substantiate the need for a RA. The DPM will make such request in writing as soon as possible after receipt of the request for RA.

STEP 4: DM will conduct a RA Analysis of the individual’s request.

STEP 5: Individual and DM are responsible for RA follow up and an interactive discussion on the status of the RA decision.

STEP 6: DM and individual will review RA Approval or Denial and complete NASA Form 1699A. Retain a copy and forward a copy of the forms to Ames to the Ames DPM.

Reasons for Denial of a RA Request (not exhaustive)

(1) The requested accommodation would not be effective
(2) Providing requested RA would result in undue hardship for the agency
(3) Inadequate medical documentation – unable to establish disability and/or the need for accommodation
(4) Requested accommodation would require elimination of an essential function(s) of the job
(5) Requested accommodation would require lowering a performance standard

**If denied, the individual must be given information on their right to file an EEO complaint, alternative dispute resolution, and alternate avenues of redress (45 calendar day rule still applies to unlawful discrimination allegations). Individuals also have the option to appeal the denial to their first-level and/or second-level supervisor.

Requesting Medical Information for RA

Medical documentation may be requested if the disability and the need for accommodation are not obvious.

If the disability is obvious or otherwise already known to the DM, the Center will not seek additional medical documentation from the requestor UNLESS the Center physician believes that medical information is necessary in order to evaluate the request. Any additional requests for medical information must pertain ONLY to the disability that requires the accommodation.

Medical information requests may be made only to substantiate that the individual has a disability. Additional medical information requests may be required to determine the need(s) for the requested accommodation.

The employee is responsible for providing sufficient documentation to support the RA request. Documentation can be from a licensed social worker, doctor, counselor or ARC physician, and can include statements from the spouse, doctor prescribed time off, and any information on equipment solutions.

The Center DPM will request medical information and provide employee with NASA Form 1699B for employees physician to complete. A position description will be attached to the notice so physician can have an understanding of the employee’s essential job duties and nature of work.

Mineral Information for Medical Documentation

Sufficient medical documentation includes the following:

(1) Describes the diagnosis
(2) Describes the nature of impairment, limitations, severity, and duration of the individual’s impairment
(3) Describes activity or activities limited by the impairment
(4) Describes the reason(s) supporting the request for reasonable accommodation, specifically, how the reasonable accommodation would assist the individual in the position

Individual may opt to sign Limited Release form authorizing NASA to contact his/her medical provider directly. The form must be reviewed by Chief Counsel’s office. The DM must explain to the employee that failure to provide medical documentation could be cause for denial of the RA request.

Employees are encouraged to use the reasonable accommodation process when they become disabled and are a qualified individual with a disability.

***Note: When an employee withdraws a request for RA, the DM must document the withdrawal on the NASA Form 1699A, both the DM and employee signs acknowledgment of the withdrawal. A copy of the NASA Form 1699A indicating the withdrawal will be retained by the DM, employee, and provided to the DPM.

If you have questions, please contact the Center’s DPM
Irene Najlis at irene.najlis@nasa.gov at (650) 604-1737.

RA Resources

Computer/Electronic Accommodation Program (CAP)- http://www.cap.mil/ or (703) 614-8416

U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)- http://www.eeoc.gov/ or (800) 669-4000


Americans with Disabilities Act National Network- https://adata.org/ or (800) 949-4232

U. S. Department of Labor- http://www.dol.gov/ or (202) 219-8412

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)- https://askjan.org/ or (800) 232-9675

US Access Board- http://www.access-board.gov/ or (202) 272-0080

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf- http://www.rid.org/ or (301) 608-0050

RESNA (Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America)- http://www.resna.org/ or (703) 524-6686


NPR 3713.1B Reasonable Accommodation Procedures.

NID 9700.103 Supplemental Premium Travel Procedural Requirements.

APR 3713.3, Reasonable Accommodation Procedures