



TIPS FOR INTERVIEWING BLIND OR LOW VISION APPLICANTS

Interviewing and hiring an applicant who is low vision or blind may be a new experience for you and your company. Here are some thoughts that may be helpful as you approach this new situation:

1. Blind or low vision applicants are every bit as diverse in terms of their job goals, qualifications, and ability to add value to your organization as other applicants.
2. With current low-tech and high-tech applications, tools, and strategies, nearly every job can be accommodated for a qualified blind or low vision employee.
3. The level of remaining vision may vary widely among blind or low vision applicants - from total blindness to the ability to read regular print. As a result, no two applicants will use the same strategies to get the job done. Some applicants will know braille and use a guide dog, while others will employ other strategies such as using magnifiers and a white cane.
4. Stay focussed on the essential functions of the job and find out how the candidate intends to perform the duties involved. Touring the workplace, having a brief discussion with someone who currently performs the job, looking at samples of the work that must be completed, etc. can all be extremely helpful in conveying what the job duties are. Once the applicant knows what the job involves, he or she can identify possible accommodation strategies.
5. On a practical basis, a blind or low vision applicant may need specific instructions to your work location, verbal guidance to the location of a chair, etc. Use the same common sense in the approach you utilize with any applicant. When in doubt, don't hesitate to ask the applicant if he or she would like you to describe a form, computer screen, etc. or take your arm when walking through a particularly congested area. If you customarily shake hands in greeting applicants, reach out and touch their hand if he or she does not detect it.
6. The best resource you have is the potential employee. There are many other resources available to assist both applicants and employers achieve a successful hire. Do not hesitate to call SSB when you need assistance.