

APPENDIX H

Tips on Interviewing Applicants with Disabilities

WHEN INTERVIEWING ANY APPLICANT WITH A DISABILITY:

- As in any other circumstance, shake hands as initial greeting (if an individual is “physically” unable to do so, shake or briefly touch the limb or shoulder extended).
- Treat the applicant as you would any other adult--don’t be patronizing. If you don’t usually address applicants by their first names, don’t make an exception for applicants with disabilities.
- If you feel it appropriate, offer the applicant assistance (for example, if an individual with poor grasping ability has trouble opening a door), but don’t assume it will necessarily be accepted. Don’t automatically give assistance without asking first, i.e., “May I be of assistance?”
- Whenever possible, let the applicant visit the actual work station.

WHEN INTERVIEWING AN APPLICANT WHO USES A WHEELCHAIR:

- Don’t lean on the wheelchair.
- Make sure you get on the same eye level with the applicant if the conversation lasts more than a couple of minutes as soon as possible, create rapport, set a positive tone.
- Keep accessibility in mind. (Is that chair/anything in the middle of your office a barrier to a wheelchair user? If so, move it aside.) Don’t make a scene, when in doubt, ask them.
- Don’t be embarrassed to use such phrases as “Let’s walk over to the plant.”

WHEN INTERVIEWING AN APPLICANT WITH A COGNITIVE OR INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY:

- Use straightforward language but don’t resort to “baby talk.”
- When giving directions or instructions, proceed directly.
- Avoid extraneous contextual or anecdotal directions, be succinct.
- Ask the applicant to summarize/paraphrase the information you have given to make sure it was understood. Be prepared to “map/write out” with “landmarks/tangible symbols Give positive feedback whenever possible and appropriate.