

PROVIDING TEMPORARY OR TRIAL ACCOMMODATION SOLUTIONS

Home / Publications / Consultants Corner

Consultants' Corner: Volume 12, Issue 08

From the desk of Tracie DeFreitas, M.S., Program Leader, Director of Training, Services, and Outreach

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not establish a requirement for the duration of time accommodations must be provided. While we tend to think of accommodation as a long-term commitment, employers are not precluded from implementing trial or short-term solutions as part of the accommodation process. Implementing temporary or trial accommodations can benefit both the employee and the employer. For example, implementing a temporary change offers the opportunity to evaluate an accommodation for effectiveness before making the decision to implement the change long-term.

From a practical standpoint, employers should consider providing temporary accommodations, even in situations that may go beyond the requirements of the ADA – *because doing so demonstrates good faith*. Situations that can warrant provision of a temporary or trial accommodation may include, *but are not limited to*:

- when time is needed to research a permanent accommodation solution, to acquire equipment, arrange a service, or identify an alternative vacancy;
- when it is necessary to test an accommodation to determine if it is effective;
- when the medical impairment is temporary but sufficiently severe enough to entitle the employee to accommodation;
- when it is necessary to avoid temporary adverse conditions in the work environment; or
- when an accommodation can currently be provided, but may eventually pose an undue hardship if provided long-term.

Documenting Temporary or Trial Accommodations

Under the ADA, employers are not required to document their effort to provide reasonable accommodation, but documentation is recommended and can be a vital way to demonstrate engagement in the interactive process. Temporary or trial accommodation solutions should be documented in the same manner as any accommodation. If a reasonable accommodation approval form is used to document the terms of an accommodation, this type of form can include information about temporary accommodations. For example, the form might include the following types of questions:

- Is the accommodation being provided on a temporary or trial basis? If yes, why?
- When will the temporary or trial period begin and end?
- Who will monitor the temporary or trial accommodation?
- What action will be taken at the end of the temporary or trial period?

JAN offers a **sample** temporary/trial accommodation approval form.

If an approval letter is more the employer's style than a form, below is *sample* language to consider including in the body of a letter:



This letter serves to inform you that your request for [list accommodation(s)], requested on [date], has been approved on a temporary basis and will be in effect until [date]. We are providing this accommodation on a temporary basis [for XYZ reason(s)]. At the completion of the temporary/trial time period, the accommodation will be reviewed to determine [if it is still needed/if it is effective/can continue to be provided without posing an undue hardship/alternative or additional accommodations are necessary.]

Overall, temporary or trial accommodations can be beneficial for employers and employees alike.

Implementing temporary accommodations allows for time to properly research an effective accommodation, offers an opportunity to test an accommodation before implementing it on a long-term basis, and can keep workers productive rather than out on a leave of absence.

For more information about providing temporary or trial accommodations, see JAN's Accommodation and Compliance Series: Providing Temporary or Trial Accommodations or contact JAN to speak with a consultant.

[🔗 Visit the Consultants' Corner Archive.](#)