

GUIDE 07 / PREPARE YOUR EVIDENCE

Accommodation and reassignment guide

Understand the two processes, make a clear request, and keep a usable record.

What you will leave with: Create a dated request and follow-up log while preserving separate retirement and workplace deadlines.

Use this guide with current official instructions. Complete worksheets privately; do not send sensitive information through the website.

Separate workplace rights from retirement requirements

Reasonable accommodation addresses changes that allow a qualified employee with a disability to perform essential work or access employment benefits. Federal employees generally pursue accommodation under the Rehabilitation Act. FERS disability retirement is a separate benefits process decided by OPM. An accommodation denial does not automatically establish retirement eligibility, and an ongoing retirement application does not replace participation in the accommodation process.

For FERS retirement, agency certification addresses accommodation in your current position and consideration of qualifying vacancies in the same agency, at the same grade or pay level, within the commuting area. Do not treat that retirement description as the outer boundary of the agency's broader accommodation obligations. EEOC reassignment guidance can involve a broader vacancy search and lower-level vacancies when no equivalent vacancy is available. Ask the agency which process and search scope it is using.

Make the request understandable

1. Find your agency's accommodation procedures and designated contact. You can request an adjustment in ordinary language; a verbal request can count, although a written record is useful.
2. Identify the work-related difficulty caused by a medical condition and the adjustment you want to discuss. You do not have to supply special legal wording.
3. If the disability or accommodation need is not obvious, ask what relevant supporting documentation is required and where it should be sent securely.
4. Ask who is handling the request, what information is missing, and the next step. Save the request and acknowledgment.

A request should focus on function and the adjustment needed. Do not send your entire medical history to a broad supervisor distribution list. Medical documentation requests should relate to the disability and accommodation need; ask for clarification when a request seems unrelated or excessive.

Participate and evaluate the result

The interactive process is a discussion about effective options. You may suggest equipment, schedule changes, environmental changes, altered methods, or other adjustments relevant to your needs. An employer may choose an effective alternative rather than your preferred option. Accommodation generally does not require eliminating essential functions or lowering legitimate performance standards.

- Confirm discussions in a short factual follow-up: your understanding, any unresolved point, and the agreed next action. Invite corrections.
- If a trial is appropriate and medically safe, agree how its effectiveness will be assessed and when it will be reviewed. Do not undertake tasks contrary to medical restrictions merely to prove failure.
- Record what improved as carefully as what remained difficult. Distinguish a temporary trial from a permanent change.
- If symptoms or duties change, communicate the change and ask whether updated documentation is needed.

Ask concrete reassignment questions

If no effective accommodation permits performance in the existing position, discuss reassignment with the designated office. Ask about vacancies, qualifications, essential duties, location, pay, tenure, schedule, and possible accommodations in the new role. Reassignment generally concerns an existing vacant position; it is not a promise to create a job, provide a promotion, or displace another employee.

Your private worksheet

What is the purpose and geographic scope of this search?

What vacancies were considered, during what period, and with what results?

What are the position's duties, pay, tenure, location, and response deadline?

What medical or qualification question remains unresolved?

Who will provide the written search outcome and SF 3112D documentation?

Do not accept or decline an offer based on a general checklist alone. Declining a qualifying reassignment can affect FERS disability eligibility. Obtain the actual offer and seek qualified advice promptly if its suitability is disputed. TFDR does not decide the legal effect of an offer.

Track outcomes without missing another deadline

Maintain a log with the date, participants, request or action, document reference, result, and next action. Save written offers, denials, trial results, and medical submissions. Ask HR for SF 3112D and related supporting records when preparing retirement documentation; the agency completes its certification.

Accommodation, discrimination, adverse-action, and retirement deadlines are distinct. A pending request or informal discussion does not automatically pause another deadline. Federal EEO contact generally begins within 45 days of the discriminatory event or effective date of a personnel action, subject to applicable exceptions. Read the notice and contact an EEO counselor or qualified attorney promptly when rights are disputed. Do not wait for a consultant to authorize your response.

Worked example and checklist

Fictional worked example

Casey requests a quieter workstation because documented symptoms worsen with interruptions. A trial reduces interruptions but does not resolve the difficulty sustaining required telephone coverage. Casey records both results and asks the accommodation coordinator to discuss other effective options. If reassignment is explored, Casey requests the written duties and search outcome instead of assuming the first suggested vacancy meets every retirement requirement.

- ☐ Request and supporting documents saved.
- ☐ Medical information sent only through the designated channel.
- ☐ Trial dates and actual outcomes documented.
- ☐ Reassignment scope and any offer clarified in writing.
- ☐ Separate deadlines entered on a calendar.
- ☐ No assumption that a denial guarantees retirement approval.

Official sources

EEOC: Reasonable accommodation and undue hardship guidance · 5 CFR 844.103: FERS disability eligibility · OPM: SF 3112 disability documentation package · OPM: FERS disability eligibility and current application route · EEOC: Federal-sector EEO complaint process and time limits

Reviewed October 14, 2026. Check current official sources before acting.

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