



# Y O U T H @ W O R K

## Disabilities & Your Job Rights

It is illegal for your employer to discriminate against you (treat you differently) or harass you because you or a friend, parent, or someone else you know has a disability, had a disability in the past, or is believed to have a disability. If you have a disability, you have a right to ask for certain workplace changes (called “reasonable accommodations”) if you need them to apply for a job, do your job, or enjoy the same rights at work as everyone else.

### Examples

**1** Manny applies to be a camp counselor. Last summer, Manny worked at a different camp, where he was voted “Counselor of the Month” twice. During his interview, Manny mentions that he has been HIV-positive for two years but says that his medication is working and that he is “able and eager” to be a counselor. The camp director tells Manny that he can’t hire him because of his HIV.

The director discriminated against Manny.

**2** Olivia, a research assistant at a lab, was diagnosed with depression. Olivia asks her supervisor if she can arrive and leave one hour later, explaining that her medicine makes her tired in the morning. Because the schedule change would not significantly disrupt work, Olivia’s supervisor agrees.

Olivia’s supervisor responded appropriately to Olivia’s request for a reasonable workplace change because of her depression.

### Keep In Mind

**Many medical conditions are protected by the law.** A medical condition that is not permanent or very serious, and that does not affect you all the time, may still be a disability under the law.

**If you need a workplace change because of a disability, you can ask for one at any time** when you are applying for a job or after you are hired. Someone else (your parents or your doctor, for example) can also ask for a workplace change for you. Your company handbook may say who you should contact at the company to ask for a workplace change.

You have a right to **keep your medical information private**. The law limits what an employer can ask you about your health. You have a right to keep any medical information you share with your employer private, with limited exceptions. For example, if you need a reasonable accommodation, your employer may share certain medical information with the manager responsible for providing accommodations.

**Report discrimination.** If you believe that you were discriminated against because you have, used to have, or are believed to have a disability, because you asked for a reasonable accommodation, or because someone you know has a disability, tell your parents, your teacher, your employer, another trusted adult, or EEOC.

**It is illegal for your employer to retaliate against you (punish you)** for reporting discrimination or participating in a discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

**You may also have rights** under other federal, state, or local laws or your company’s policies.

### Need to File a Complaint?

If you think you have been discriminated against, you can file a formal complaint, called a “charge of discrimination,” with EEOC. We may mediate or investigate your charge and take legal action to stop any illegal discrimination.

We accept charges from applicants, employees (full-time, part-time, seasonal, and temporary), and former employees, regardless of citizenship and work authorization status.

Our services are free, and you do not need a lawyer to file a charge. For more information about how and when to file a charge, visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/youth/filing.html>.

Learn more about your rights as a young worker at <http://www.eeoc.gov/youth/>.

You can also email us at [youth.atwork@eeoc.gov](mailto:youth.atwork@eeoc.gov) or call us at 1-800-669-4000 (TTY: 1-800-669-6820).