



Alternative Hiring Process Frequently Asked Questions for Agency HR and Hiring Managers

Q1: What is the Alternative Hiring Process (AHP)?

A: The Commonwealth of Virginia is committed to inclusive hiring. The AHP process is established as part of a comprehensive strategy to increase employment of individuals with disabilities within state government, which offers a path to state employment.

Q2: How do applicants participate in the AHP?

A: An AHP applicant must be certified as an individual with a significant disability related barrier to employment as determined by a Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), or Department for the Blind & Vision Impaired (DBVI) Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. If approved, the applicant will receive a Certificate of Disability (COD) that must be attached to their state employment application.

Q3: What types of positions can be offered through the AHP?

A: Executive Branch agencies may leverage the Alternative Hiring Process to fill wage and classified vacancies. Agencies in other branches of state government are encouraged to participate in AHP.

Q4: Are certain positions designated for applicants with disabilities participating in AHP?

A: No, agencies do not need to limit job announcements for the Alternative Hiring Process to specific positions. Agencies are encouraged to incorporate the Alternative Hiring Process as a standard part of the hiring process for any vacancy. Applicants will designate their interest for consideration through the Alternative Hiring Process by providing their Certificate of Disability (COD) on their application.

Q5: Do we need to offer the Alternative Hiring Process to all applicants?

A: DHRM strongly encourages all agencies to post vacancies with language that reflects the Commonwealth's focus on inclusive hiring. As noted in **2.2-203.2:3 Code of Virginia**, it is the policy of the Commonwealth to promote and increase the employment of individuals with

disabilities (IWD's) at all levels and occupations by state agencies, institutions, boards, and authorities of the Commonwealth.

Q6: Does the AHP applicant receive priority consideration during the screening process?

A: Agency HR/Hiring managers may provide priority consideration in the screening process for COD certified applicants that meet minimum qualifications.

Q7: Do I need to consider employees in layoff status or veterans before providing priority consideration to an applicant with a certification of disability for a classified position?

A: The Alternative Hiring Process does not supersede the placement rights of employees in layoff status or preferential consideration for veterans.

Q8: Are applicants approved for the Alternative Hiring Process guaranteed interviews?

A: No, applicants are screened by Agency HR or Hiring Managers to identify applicants who meet the minimum qualifications for the position. Interviews are offered to the best qualified candidates. Therefore, interviews are not guaranteed for all AHP certified participants.

Q9: Does the AHP applicant need to meet any of the preferred qualifications to be screened as qualified for an interview?

A: Candidates lacking preferred qualifications will not be excluded during the screening process.

Q10: How long can an applicant use an approved Certificate of Disability?

A: Applicants requesting consideration through AHP should present a Certificate of Disability dated within 3 years of the application date. Applicants may be requested to periodically update their COD.

Please contact the Department for Aging & Rehabilitative Services (DARS) to discuss any concerns or questions regarding the effective date of a COD presented for consideration.

Q11: Can the Certificate of Disability be used multiple times?

A: The COD can be used multiple times for priority consideration until the applicant secures a classified or other salaried position.

Q12: If an agency recruits a wage position non-competitively, does the applicant still need to provide a COD?

A: Yes, applicants need to include the COD with their application and/or resume, which will provide them priority consideration for the position. The COD will need to be retained with the applicant's records.

Q13: Does an applicant need to provide a COD a second time, if they apply for a classified or other salaried position after being employed in a wage role?

A: Yes, the applicant needs to include the COD with their application and/or resume to receive priority consideration for the position.

Q14: Are current classified employees eligible for participation through AHP?

A: No, the AHP was established to create an alternate path to state employment for individuals with disabilities. Therefore, current state employees are not eligible.

Q15: Can former state employees use a COD to be considered for rehire?

A: Yes, former state employees are considered external applicants and would be eligible to use AHP for consideration for state employment.

Q16: Who determines if the employee performs the essential functions of the position during the 6-month provisional period?

A: Consistent with current practice, the direct supervisor or manager will assess the employee's performance of the essential functions of the posted position. Managers should partner with their Agency HR to ensure appropriate accommodations are in place, as needed to ensure new employees are set up for success.

Q17: Who should the supervisor contact if an employee needs an accommodation to perform their job functions?

A: Supervisors need to contact their Agency HR or designated point of contact for accommodations

Q18: What kind of job assistance or accommodations can the agency and/or the employee get on the job site?

A: If needed and approved by DARS or DBVI and your agency, some services can include task analysis, job coaching or assessments to help employees adjust to the workplace, and to learn and perform their work duties.

DARS can also offer disability awareness and diversity training to educate your managers and staff on disability etiquette.

Q19: How should an absence be handled if an employee needs to take time off during the 6-month provisional period due to their disability? Are they allowed to return to complete the 6-month period?

A: Supervisors should collaborate with Agency HR to appropriately address any needed absences.

Q20: Will agencies be required to track applicants through the Alternative Hiring Process?

A: Yes, as per [Code of Virginia, § 2.2-203.2:3](#) state agencies need to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and provide a yearly plan on how that will be achieved. Per [Code of Virginia § 2.2-1213](#) , at a minimum, agencies need to track the following information on individuals with disabilities who:

- sought state employment through the alternative hiring process;
- currently employed through the alternative hiring process; and
- had their employment in a position filled through the noncompetitive process.

For further questions about CODs, assessments and DARS services, contact Sandy Phipps, DHRM/DARS Liaison at 804-688-5841, or Sandra.Phipps@dars.virginia.gov