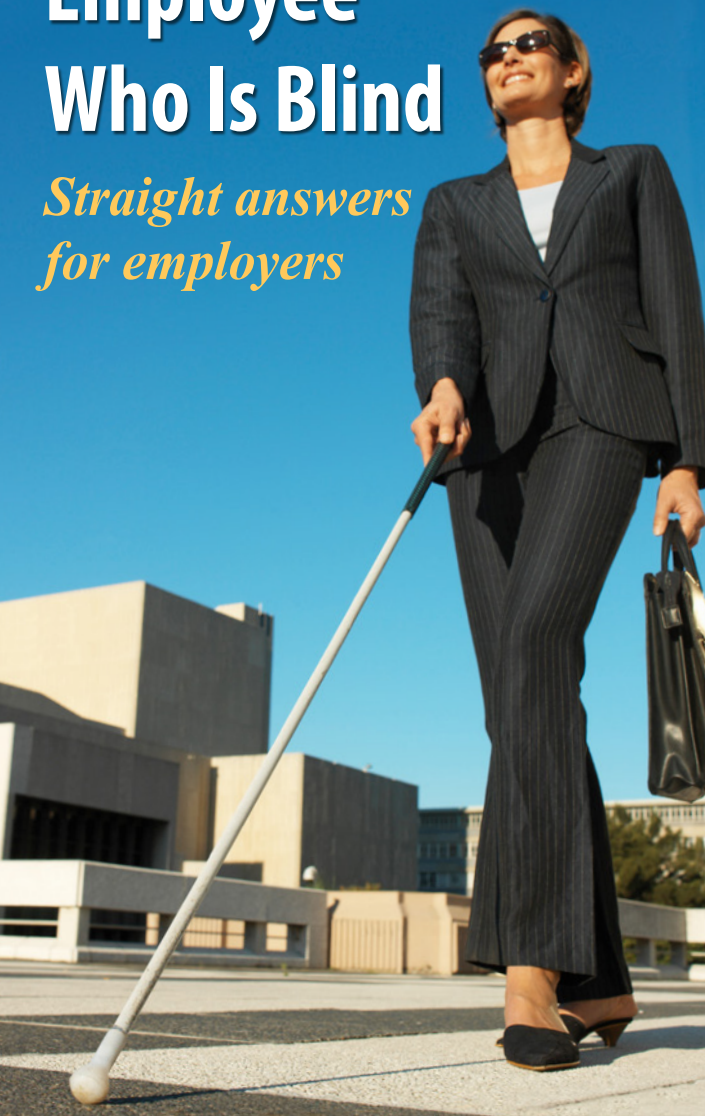


# Hiring an Employee Who Is Blind

*Straight answers  
for employers*



**Texas Workforce Solutions-  
Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

*Texas Workforce Solutions is comprised of the Texas Workforce Commission, 28 local workforce development boards and our service-providing partners. Together we provide workforce, education, training and support services, including vocational rehabilitation assistance for the people of Texas.*



## Answers to questions you may have been afraid to ask...

**Q: How does an employee who is blind get to work?**

**A:** Getting to work is the employee's responsibility, period. Some employees who are blind use public transportation or take cabs. Some walk or hire drivers.

**Q: Do people who are blind just see total blackness?**

**A:** Very few people who are blind have no vision at all. Most have some degree of usable vision.

**Q: How can people who are blind use a computer?**

**A:** There are programs that enlarge the image on the screen or allow the text on the screen to be translated into speech or Braille output. You can expect as much of your worker with a visual impairment as you do of your other workers.

**Q: What sort of work can people who are blind do?**

**A:** People who are blind can do just about any thing a sighted person can do; they just use different methods and tools.

**Q: Can people who are blind read printed materials?**

**A:** Yes. Depending on the person's vision, they can use an electronic magnifying device, which enlarges print or pictures on a screen. They can also use a scanner and software that translates printed materials into speech or Braille output.

**Q: Will my health insurance costs increase if I hire a person who is blind?**

**A:** No. Employees who are blind don't have any higher medical expenses than other employees.

**Q: What sort of questions can I ask during a job interview of a potential employee who is blind?**

**A:** You ask anything you would ask any other prospective employee. You can also ask how they will accomplish their job tasks.

**Q: Will my employee who is blind have to take a lot of sick days?**

**A:** Blindness doesn't mean illness. A 25-year study conducted by the DuPont Corporation found that workers with disabilities at DuPont had equal or better attendance than 90 percent of their non-disabled coworkers.

**Q:** How much will it cost my company for the equipment needed by the employee who is blind?

**A:** This varies. Some people already have the assistive technology they need. Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) works with employers to provide the accommodations the employee needs to perform the essential tasks of the job.

**Q:** Will I have to supervise an employee who is blind differently from other employees?

**A:** No. Supervising a blind employee should be no different than supervising any other employee.

**Q:** Do all employees who are blind bring a dog guide to work?

**A:** No. Only about six percent of blind Americans use a dog guide.



**Q: Does the employee who is blind need an assistant?**

**A:** No. The employee who is blind should be able to accomplish all tasks independently.

**Q: If a person who is blind applies for a job at my company, do I have to hire him or her?**

**A:** You do not have to hire an applicant because he or she is blind. The best qualified candidate should be hired for the job.

**Q: How can I avoid offending an employee who is blind?**

**A:** People are people, whether sighted or blind. Just be courteous and respectful as you would with any employee.

**Q: What happens if other employees don't want to work with a person who is blind?**

**A:** Personnel issues such as this are the responsibility of the employer; however TWS-VRS can provide awareness presentations and on-site sensitivity training to your employees at no cost to you.

**Q: What happens if I lay off or fire an employee who is blind?**

**A:** There should be no difference from laying off or firing a sighted employee. A blind employee should be treated the same as any other.

# Contact Information

For more information:

**800-628-5115**

*[www.texasworkforce.org](http://www.texasworkforce.org)*

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*Equal Opportunity Employer/Program*

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

**Relay Texas: 800-735-2989 (TTY)  
and 711 (Voice).**

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