

LHON

Leber's Hereditary Optic Neuropathy



Navigating Employment



Looking to maintain employment or
find a new career opportunity?

Navigating Employment

First Steps

- **Contact your state's agency that provides assistance to the blind/visually impaired.** Open a case with this agency, to receive guidance and training needed to learn skills for independent living and for career/occupational transitions.
- **Have your doctor provide the paperwork declaring you legally blind.** The designation of legally blind occurs once your vision is 20/200 or worse in both eyes. Make sure the paperwork uses the phrase "legally blind."
- **Learn what assistive technologies are available,** such as CCTVs, digital magnifiers for computers, screen readers, etc. If you have a smart phone, learn the accessibility and assistive technology available on that device. Your state agency may provide devices and/or training. There are many videos online that showcase these devices and how to use them.
- **Assess your disability insurance options,** including private disability insurance, short and long-term disability, and SSDI.
- **Learn the options you have for transportation.** Discounted or free of charge transit passes may be available from your local government, which may also offer paratransit services. Consider ride-sharing services, such as Uber and Lyft. Learn to navigate as a passenger or pedestrian.
- **Identify and utilize a support network.** Family, friends, professional counselors/therapists/psychologists can all play a role. LHON can be emotionally challenging and having someone personal and private to talk to can help. Your state agency or local blind support organization may be able to refer you to a counselor specialized in working with people with vision loss. Finding a mentor you can relate with can be helpful in moving forward.



1st Steps

- Contact your State agency that provides assistance
- Paperwork from Doctor
- Learn about Assistive Technology
- Assess your disability insurance options
- Learn about transportation and mobility options
- Establish a support network

If You Currently Are Employed ...

Actions to take

- Inform your manager or HR that you have a disability to ensure that the situation is not perceived as a performance issue.
- State that you are requesting accommodations.
- Request a workplace assessment to determine your needs and potential solutions.
- Work with your employer and/or state agency to identify and obtain the accommodations required to perform your job.

Other things to consider

- Every person's situation will be different and adapting will take time.
- What types of training do you need?
- Can/Should you take some time off? If taking time off, what are the impacts? Explore the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
- Understand your rights as part of the ADA and anti-discrimination laws. The American Disabilities Act of 1990 guarantees reasonable accommodations.

Many people's initial response to LHON vision loss is to conclude that they can no longer do their current job, so they quit. Before taking this action, consider that it may be better to find a way to continue with an employer who knows and will support you as you work through the transition, than to leave and seek employment with a different employer. Don't let this decision happen before you've pursued all internal options.

If You Are Seeking Employment ...

Actions to take

- Think about your career aspirations.
- Assess if and how LHON can affect these career aspirations. Use this information to guide your accommodation needs. Articulate why LHON will not be a barrier to your success.
- Stay productive and constructive.
- Seek training that supports your career goals. Some organizations offer training and educational services free-of-charge.

Other things to consider

- Explore resources targeted for the blind/visually impaired.
- Consider the company culture in terms of inclusiveness and diversity.
- Are there job specific training programs you can attend?
- When/how to disclose your vision impairment during the hiring process?

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More information:

On the Web: www.LHON.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/29805437752

Visit us on the web!
www.LHON.org



For more information

To assist you in navigating your employment journey, please visit the following:

- ⇒ [Job Accommodation Network](#)—Information and free consultations about workplace accommodations or the ADA.
- ⇒ Organizations of and for those who are blind/vision impaired:
 - ⇒ [National Federation of the Blind](#)
 - ⇒ [American Council of the Blind](#)
 - ⇒ [American Federation for the Blind—Career Connect](#)
- ⇒ Learn about Assistive Technology on your devices:
 - ⇒ [Apple](#) or call 877-204-3930
 - ⇒ [Microsoft](#) or call 800-936-5900
 - ⇒ [Android](#)
- ⇒ [Hadley](#) - free instructional videos on Assistive Technology
- ⇒ [Career Advantage for V.I.P.'s](#) - employment primer for visually impaired people through Mississippi State University
- ⇒ Links to helpful information:
 - ⇒ [National Library Services](#)
 - ⇒ [State-by-State list of organizations for the blind](#)