

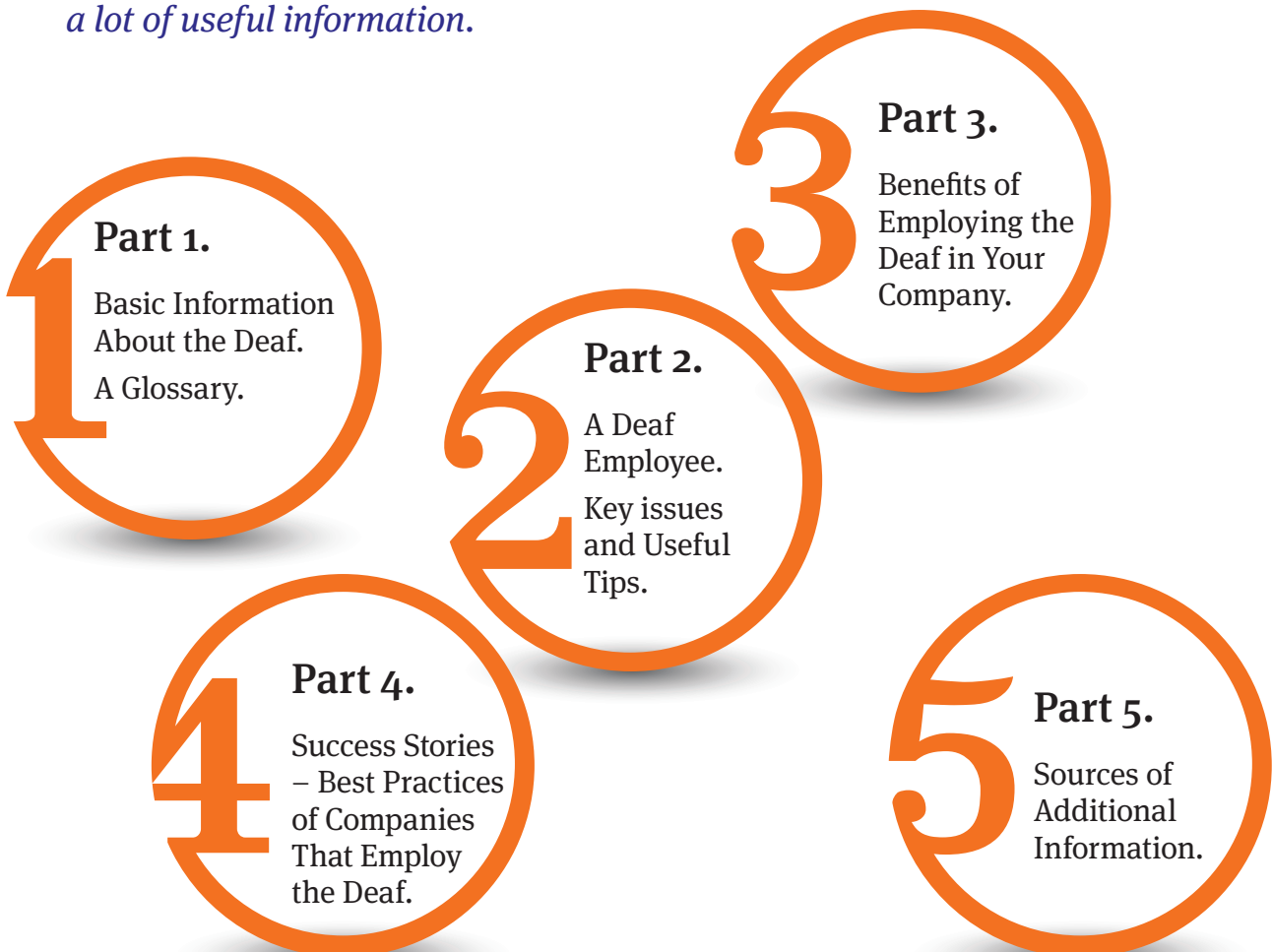
# DEAF WORK

## "DEAF EMPLOYEE" – Employer's guide



### INTRODUCTION

- The guide is dedicated for employers who display open-mindedness and sensibility when addressing the issue of employing deaf people. It is a comprehensive manual which brings an elementary and essential knowledge of employing the deaf. The manual contains many tips and a lot of useful information.*



## DEAF WORK – Model Dedicated to Improve Employment Accessibility Among the Deaf People

### EXCERPTS FROM THE MANUAL

#### Benefits of employing a deaf person:

- a partial or complete exemption from contributions to the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled (PFRON);
- an opportunity to get an employment subsidy when employing a deaf person;
- an opportunity to get a subsidy to cover the costs of workstation adaptations, trainings etc.;
- if a disabled worker has a severe disability and a medical condition that significantly impede his/her work, then the reimbursement received by the employer is threefold;
- if a disabled worker has a moderate disability and a medical condition that significantly impede his/her work, then the reimbursement received by the employer is threefold.

Deaf people have a great skill potential. It is mainly up to employers whether the potential is displayed and fulfilled.

#### THE STRENGTHS OF DISABLED PEOPLE:

- conscientiousness
- attention to detail
- commitment
- diligence
- honesty
- workplace attachment (deaf people use to switch jobs less often than hearing people)
- inclined towards tidiness
- observation skills
- a good work organization
- an ability to carry out tasks with an undivided attention (they are not distracted by conversations with co-workers)
- higher productivity
- predispositions towards tasks that require patience and precision
- a sense of aesthetics
- manual skills

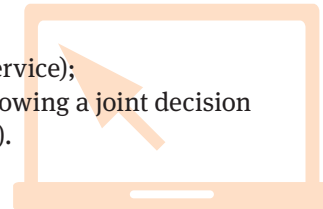
*Hiring people with hearing disabilities does not necessarily create the need for special workplace adjustments. Try using rational improvements – these kinds of solutions reduce communication barriers and help employees doing their professional duties.*



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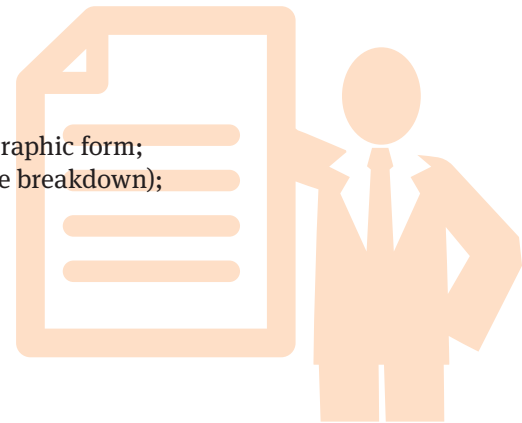
### Workplace adjustments:

- pens and notebooks at the workplace;
- using a personal computer or phone to communicate within a company (SMS, e-mail, messengers, Skype);
- using on-line translation services at the workplace (e.g. <http://wideotlumacz.pl> – an on-line translation service);
- it is worth considering a sign language interpreter, following a joint decision of an employer and a deaf employee (if the need arises).



### Safety guidelines:

- installing a light signal alarm system;
- labelling workstation and floor lines;
- preparing work instructions and staff rules both in a written and graphic form;
- establishing new procedures (e.g. in case of fire alarm or a machine breakdown);
- preparing co-workers for the arrival of a deaf person.



### It is worth knowing that:

- the term „deaf mute” is viewed as offensive among deaf people. Deaf persons are not mute, as they have their own language – the sign language;
- when organising a meeting (e.g. a job interview) with deaf people it is important to prepare the room beforehand – a room should be spacious and well-lit, so that the deaf could see everything properly;
- it is worth remembering not to come between an interpreter (or another sign-language user) and a deaf person;
- we should not face his or her back towards the source of light (e.g. towards a window) – a deaf person will not be able to see our face;
- if your conversation with a deaf person is mediated by an interpreter, address a deaf person directly – do not ask the interpreter questions like „ask him/her”, because it is impolite;
- an interpreter does not take part in the conversation and share opinions – the task of an interpreter is to translate one language into another;
- if a conversation with a deaf worker involves serious matters it is essential that a sign-language interpreter is not related to the worker in any way – that guarantees direction and neutrality.

## 5 Important Rules:

- 1.** *A deaf person has many other traits apart from being deaf. Do not narrow down your perception solely to this one trait.*
- 2.** *Each deaf person is different. Do not generalise your past experiences with deaf people onto the ones you have not talked to yet.*
- 3.** *Treat a deaf job candidate with respect. As others, the deaf have ambition and aspirations. Do not offer them an under-qualified job only because they are deaf.*
- 4.** *Do not judge a deaf person by their speech. The quality of their speech is not an indicator of their skills. Instead of throwing away an application that has a few misspellings, read it attentively.*
- 5.** *Make sure that a deaf employee who is signing a job contract has properly understood its terms and conditions.*

## Are you thinking about hiring a deaf employee?

### Remember:

*Deaf people may be less skilled than hearing people when it comes to self-presentation. It is worth remembering that the difficulties in talking about one's skills does not necessarily mean they are not there. Instead of having a conversation it is better to ask a deaf candidate to present a sample of his or her skills. Another solution is to propose a 3-day trial period. It would be easier to assess whether a person meets the expectations.*