

Adult Learning Disability Assessment Process

What is a learning disability (LD) assessment?

An LD assessment is a gathering of relevant information about an individual's areas of strengths and challenges to determine whether or not he or she may have a learning disability. The components of the assessment process may vary depending on which individual, clinic, or agency is conducting the assessment, but most assessments include the following:

- **Screening** (informal interview, brief test, career interest inventories, and/or review of medical, school, or work histories)
- **Evaluation** (formal testing for achievement, intelligence, and processing)
- **Diagnosis** (a statement specifying the results of the assessment, including the type of LD identified)
- **Recommendations** (for work, school, and/or daily living)

Why should someone be assessed?

Adults choose to undergo an LD assessment for a number of reasons, including:

- Significant problems at work or school that prevent them from reaching their career and/or educational goals.
- Significant problems in daily life (e.g., relationships, managing finances, decision-making).
- A desire to know why they have always struggled to learn and remember information.

The first step to overcoming challenges is to determine the cause of the challenges. By completing the LD assessment process, adults can obtain the information and documentation they need to formally request accommodations at work or in school, and to determine effective strategies for learning and living based on their areas of strengths.

Who can conduct an LD assessment?

Only qualified professionals can conduct LD assessments. Such professionals have been certified to select, administer, and interpret a variety of neurological, psychological, educational, and vocational assessment instruments. The professional chosen should:

- have experience assessing adults for LD;
- have information about local and state services and resources; and
- be able to help adults use their assessment results to determine their legal rights and responsibilities, strategies, accommodations, and next steps to meet goals.



To find a qualified professional in their area, adults should consider the following resources:

- State and local LDA chapters at http://www.ldanatl.org/state_chapters/index.asp
- Community Mental Health Centers
- Rehabilitation Services Agency (<http://rsa.ed.gov/people.cfm>, click on "State Agencies/Contacts.")
- Local private psychologist or psychological clinic
- Local college or university psychology department
- University-affiliated hospitals and clinics

How much does an LD assessment cost?

The cost of an LD assessment varies depending on where it is done, who does the assessment, and how comprehensive the assessment process is. Assessments typically range from \$500 - \$2,500.

Some insurance policies will cover the cost of the assessment. Local mental health clinics and university psychology departments sometimes offer a sliding scale fee for the assessment. Vocational Rehabilitation agencies sometimes provide LD assessments at no cost as part of their intake process for agency applicants who are accepted as new clients.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) clients who have either a history of LD **OR** disclose to their case managers that they think they have LD have a right to an LD assessment as part of their TANF services.



Questions to ask the qualified assessor

- Have you tested many adults with learning disabilities before?
- How much will the assessment cost, and what does the cost cover?
- Can insurance cover the costs? Are there other funding sources? Can you provide a payment plan?
- How long will the assessment take?
- What will be involved in the assessment?
- Who will have access to the assessment results?
- Will there be a written report of the assessment?
- Will you explain the written report to me?
- Will the assessment give me more information about why I am having trouble with my job, school, or daily life?
- Will you give me ideas about accommodations for my disability?
- Will you give me information about how to self-advocate for my disability at school or work?
- Will the report make recommendations about where I can go for further help?

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