disability inclusion overview
INTRODUCTION

Recruiting and engaging Virginians with disabilities in volunteer service is fundamental to the Corporation for National and Community Service mission to “provide service opportunities for individuals of all ages and backgrounds.” People with disabilities contribute a wide range of talents to our communities and want opportunities to serve in significant ways. Successful organizations strive to assemble a wide and diverse volunteer force into their service efforts, part of which means including people with disabilities.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, over 56 million (or 18.7%) men, women and children of all ages, races, ethnic backgrounds, economic levels and religious affiliations have some form of disability, ranging from sensory and physical disabilities to ‘hidden’ disabilities. Hidden disabilities include cognitive and learning disabilities, some hearing and visual impairments, alcoholism and addiction, autism, epilepsy, diabetes, some mental health diagnoses, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Today, with nearly one in five Americans having a disability, this means that disability touches all of our lives in some fashion. The U.S. Department of Labor reports that only 20% of people with disabilities are employed compared to 69% of the population without disabilities. AmeriCorps offers an excellent opportunity for people with disabilities to serve their communities, learning valuable job skills as well as providing AmeriCorps programs with a diverse team of members.

OUR PARTNERS

The Virginia Office of Volunteerism and Community Service (OVCS) offers assistance through its AmeriCorps program officers. Working with assigned programs, program officers arrange technical assistance and make grant monies available to AmeriCorps programs to assist in making reasonable accommodations, purchasing assistive devices or auxiliary aids, holding outreach activities, and arranging training programs. The OVCS relies on state and community partners in meeting its goal of including people with disabilities in AmeriCorps service.

The OVCS has developed a partnership with the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) to provide opportunities for people with disabilities who are clients of DARS to serve in AmeriCorps. The DARS supports Centers for Independent Living (CILs) who also partner with OVCS. In addition to providing peer to peer services and social and educational opportunities for people with disabilities, CILs advocate to promote the leadership, independence, and productivity of people with disabilities in communities.

Virginia has a Developmental Disabilities Network comprised of a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), a Developmental Disabilities Council, and an Office for Protection and Advocacy. Virginia’s UCEDD, the Partnership for People with Disabilities located at Virginia Commonwealth University, has supported OVCS for years in providing training and technical assistance in best practice in recruiting and managing people with disabilities as service members. The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, Virginia’s DD Council, works to guide public policy changes that create opportunities for new approaches in service delivery systems for people with disabilities.

And, Virginia’s Office for Protection and Advocacy, or VOPA, works to protect the legal, human and civil rights of people with disabilities. All three DD network partners are represented on the OVCS ‘Inclusion Team.’

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The OVCS has a number of guiding principles that form the foundation for its work in including people with disabilities in AmeriCorps services. Many of the principles are also included in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The philosophy of the ADA was based on a simple concept that soon came to be recognized as the ‘spirit of the law.’ This concept, simply stated, asks that whenever we consider people at all, we should think to include people with disabilities!

• Person-First Language – If people with disabilities are to be included in all aspects of society and respected and valued as fellow citizens, language cannot be used that sets them apart. People with disabilities are people, first. They are moms, dads, sons, daughters, spouses, friends, employers, students, and more. Each person is unique. The only thing people with disabilities have in common is that they have a medical diagnosis of a disability. While disabilities are natural and anyone can become disabled at any time in their life, when the diagnosis is seen as the most important characteristic of a person, they are devalued as an individual. People First language puts the person before the disability and describes what a person has, not who a person is. For instance, ‘John communicates with a device’ instead of ‘John is non-verbal.’ Or, ‘Pam has a brain injury’ instead of ‘Pam is brain damaged.’

• Self-Determination – At its core, self-determination is about being captain of your own ship; setting goals, working to reach those goals, and believing you can control your own destiny. Self-determination is important for everyone, but often more difficult to learn for people with disabilities. Sometimes, people assume that people with disabilities cannot think for themselves and make decisions or feel like they need to do that for the person with a disability to protect them. But the philosophy of self-determination seeks to protect the rights of people with disabilities to make fundamental life choices and to support them in becoming participating and contributing members of the community. For this to happen, people with disabilities must have information, skills, supports and experiences that enable them to make informed choices.
Inclusive Environment – AmeriCorps service embodies the principle of contribution by community members. This means that everyone can contribute and that an inclusive service environment is a welcoming place for all. It is respectful, supportive and equalizing, and reaches out and includes individuals with disabilities regardless of ability.

Universal Design – Universal Design provides a blueprint for constructing environments and learning that works for everyone. There is no one-size-fits-all solution but rather the use of flexible building space and learning approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs. Examples of universal design include curb cuts which can be used by those using wheelchairs, baby strollers, and bicycles. Universal design for learning might include presenting information in large text, or using video or hands-on learning to demonstrate job tasks that help visual learners, auditory learners, and tactile learners.

Americans with Disabilities Act – The enactment of the ADA in 1990 signaled a transformation in our Nation’s public policies toward people with disabilities. Since then, people have worked hard to eliminate harmful stereotypes and have grown to understand disability as a natural part of life. Americans are taking steps, such as renovating and constructing public facilities to make them fully accessible, to ensure that people with disabilities are fully integrated into our communities and workplaces. And communities have come to appreciate that people with disabilities are a key element – and an untapped resource – in sustaining our Nation’s economic growth. Because the many barriers confronting people with disabilities took generations to develop, breaking them down requires a consistent, coordinated, and farsighted effort. The spirit behind the ADA can only be realized over time by people working together; joining forces to make our community resources, information services, community events, and job opportunities as accessible to individuals with disabilities and older Americans as they are to everyone else.

Action Steps

1. Review this entire guide. This guide is an excellent starting point on becoming familiar with the terminology, the basics of an inclusive environment, appropriate screening and interviewing protocol, and locating disability resources in Virginia. A more detailed resource – A Handbook for Inclusion of People with Disabilities in National & Community Service Programs – can be found in Appendix A.

2. As you recruit members with disabilities, review the Disability Benefits Overview in Appendix B which explains how any benefits (SSI, SSDI, food stamps, etc) of prospective or current members will be impacted by receiving the member living allowance or education award. Many benefits are not affected, but it is good practice to check before recruiting a prospective member with a disability.

3. Conduct the Disability Inclusiveness Checklist found in Appendix C of this handbook to develop an inclusive environment action plan.

4. OVCS works closely with the Workforce Networks and can assist in identifying prospective candidates with disabilities that might be a good match for your program. A listing of the Workforce Networks can be found as Appendix D in this handbook. You may also contact the Workforce Network directly for assistance in identifying prospective candidates with disabilities. Although we utilize the assistance of the Workforce Networks, you do not need to limit your disability recruitment efforts solely to them. You may be aware of other disability organizations, such as a Center for Independent Living or Arc chapter, in your area that might also be able to refer prospective members. These resources are also listed in Appendix D.

5. If you are recruiting a member with a disability and he or she needs an accommodation, the OVCS has funds available to assist in the purchase of an accommodation device (e.g., large-print books, customized door knobs, etc.). Complete the Application for Reasonable Accommodation Funds in Appendix G and submit it by email to your Program Officer. The application will be reviewed, and we will notify you if funds are available to assist with the issue. Many accommodation issues can be easily resolved without funding, but funding is available if needed.

If you would like disability training for your program and members to help with the recruitment of members with disabilities, we have funds available to assist in that effort. Contact your Program Officer directly for assistance or info@vaservice.org.
section I

INCLUSIVE SERVICE ENVIRONMENTS & SERVICE DESCRIPTIONS
Creating an inclusive service environment is challenging, thought provoking, and rewarding. It is a continuous process, one that evolves and responds to changes in the environment or in policies. It becomes an integral part of all that you do, from kick-offs to celebrations, from recruitment to retention, from policy to practice. It impacts team-building and participant development. It is an essential part of strategic planning and meeting planning. It benefits individuals with disabilities and those without. It guides those who are served and those who serve, those who direct and advise, and those who lead.

An inclusive service environment starts with the actions and attitudes of the individuals who are already in that environment. A program manager who thinks first about what someone can do is sure to be more inclusive than one who thinks about an individual’s limitations. A program manager who uses “people first” language is already aware that individuals with physical or mental disabilities are people before they are disabled.

A program manager who leads by example, who provides training in disability awareness and sensitivity, and who works to ensure equal expectations and contributions will be more successful in creating an inclusive service environment than one who does not.

An inclusive service environment ensures the respect and dignity of individuals with disabilities. It does not pry into medical histories or diagnoses, and it guards against the casual exchange of privileged information. It speaks, and more importantly, listens to the individual with a disability. It understands that personal preference in accommodation is often a personal need. It is flexible when necessary.

The built environment (paths, doors, rooms, restrooms, kitchens) of an inclusive service environment meets current accessibility standards to the greatest extent possible. Accessibility is considered when planning events, seeking program or meeting space, and evaluating placement sites. When you move desks or serve refreshments, give consideration to ensuring the continued ability of persons with mobility, hearing, visual, and cognitive disabilities to continue to use the space independently.

An inclusive service environment willingly and proactively provides accommodations. When requests are made and questions arise, the individual making the request is asked for clarification first before anyone else. In an inclusive service environment, the first considerations are ensuring access, opportunity, independence, and dignity; not cost or inconvenience.

In an inclusive service environment, people with disabilities are welcomed and are valued for their contributions as individuals. The presence of a disability is not seen as a detriment. Rather, disability is valued as part of the range of diversity that exists in the human condition. In some cases, a disability can present challenges that allow program staff and participants to grow and to enhance their knowledge and skills. In an inclusive service environment, staff and participants work with the goal of ensuring full inclusion and participation of an individual with a disability. Everyone is aware that excusing an individual from activities (e.g. “It is okay if you don’t come to the meeting because it is in an inaccessible location.”) or denying information (e.g., “Never mind that you cannot hear the training, it is not that important anyway.”) are exclusive actions. In an inclusive service environment, full participation is not the goal- it is the action.

An inclusive service environment understands that every individual is just that - an individual. No two people experience disability in the same way. Two individuals with the same disability may have very different perspectives, attitudes, interests, backgrounds and skills. An inclusive service environment sees individuals, not stereotypes.

TIPS FOR INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENTS

- Ensuring that background noise in meetings is minimized helps everyone at the meeting.
- There should always be a 36-inch wide path to all areas.
- Providing accommodations can assist in full participation in all activities.

Elements of an Inclusive Service Description

Inclusive service descriptions contain all the elements of a good service description, but also clearly demonstrate the essential and marginal functions of a position. They are a critical first step to creating an inclusive service environment. Taking the time to ensure that your service descriptions are inclusive will assist you in outreach and recruitment. It will send a clear message that you are actively inclusive and will help you make good management decisions.

Matching an applicant with a disability and a service position is virtually the same as matching any other applicant with a service position. Spending time to create a current, thorough, and clear service description is well worth the energy and will increase your ability to make good matches for all participants. And, whether disability is present or not, we all learn differently—some of learn best by seeing things, by hearing things, or by touching things—and we all benefit from service descriptions that are universally designed.

Evaluate service positions periodically. Positions change and you should reflect those changes in the service description. An essential function is one that is critical to the position. For example, teaching is an essential function of a tutoring position. A marginal function is less important: the nature of the position does not change if the function is removed. Answering the telephone might be a marginal function for a tutor. The key objective of a service description is to identify the functions of the position that are essential.
What is an Essential Function?
An essential function is a task or service duty that is critical to the position. If it is not performed, then the nature of the position is fundamentally changed. For example, answering the telephone is an essential function for a receptionist position.

Three factors that make a function essential:

- the position exists to perform a specific function;
- there are a limited number of other participants available to perform the function or among whom the function can be distributed;
- a function is highly specialized and the person in the position is selected for special expertise or ability to perform it.

Explanatory examples of an essential function:
The position exists to perform a specific function. Examples:
- Providing education through public speaking and information dissemination.
- Reading stories to preschool children in their homes.

there are a limited number of other participants available to perform the function or among whom the function can be distributed. Examples:
- Having a commercial driver’s license.
- Having experience installing drywall.

A function is highly specialized, and the person in the position is selected for special expertise or ability to perform it. Examples:
- Having the ability to understand and communicate in Spanish and English.
- Providing estate planning legal advice to participants at the senior center.

When identifying essential functions:
- Identify purpose and importance of tasks
- Consider frequency with which the task is performed
- Consider amount of time required to perform the function
- Consider consequences if the function is not performed
- Distinguish between methods and results (i.e., focus on the end result rather than the method)

Identifying the essential functions will be invaluable when:
- Interviewing applicants
- Determining the qualifications of applicants
- Identifying accommodations for qualified applicants with a disability
- Ensuring a meaningful experience for participants

What is a Marginal Function?
A marginal function is one that is part of a service position, but not essential. It may be a task that is done on an as-needed basis; or a task that can be easily reassigned. Analyzing service functions is crucial in determining if they are essential or marginal.

When identifying marginal functions:
- Identify the purpose and necessity of the task
- Consider whether the task is critical to the service position; if it is not performed, will the nature of the position be fundamentally changed?
- Consider if the task can be performed on an as-needed basis
- Consider if the task can be easily reassigned.

What is the definition of a “Qualified Individual with a Disability”?
A “qualified individual with a disability” is able to perform the essential functions of the position with or without accommodations. He or she must also meet any qualifications or certifications that the program has in place, such as being a registered nurse. Simply because someone may be a person with a disability does not mean that you must accept him or her to serve as a participant in your program. The individual must meet the same qualifications as other participants in the program. Individuals who wish to be participants must be able to perform the essential functions of the position with or without accommodations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE TASK EXAMPLES</th>
<th>ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS</th>
<th>MARGINAL FUNCTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants provide homework help to 3rd graders at an after-school program and occasionally fix snacks for students.</td>
<td>Ability to read and explain third grade subject matter, ability to communicate effectively with children</td>
<td>Fixing snacks at the end of the tutoring session.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participants establish committees of residents in low-income housing to promote self-sufficiency and drug/crime prevention programs.</td>
<td>Effective communication, diplomacy and tact, planning, organization, and follow through on activities and goals.</td>
<td>Answering telephones, computer skills, and boxing and transporting materials to committee meetings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Action Steps

1. Conduct a task analysis of your service descriptions using the sample template below
2. Visit www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/tasks.html to find helpful information on conducting a job task analysis
3. Videotape a staff or service member doing the job or task that could be used during interviews or job training
4. Visit www.cast.org to learn more about universal design for learning
5. Ensure that performance measures are included in position descriptions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE POSITION TITLE</th>
<th>DEPARTMENT/DIVISION</th>
<th>FULL OR PART-TIME?</th>
<th>SUPERVISOR NAME</th>
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</table>

**SERVICE POSITION SUMMARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN TASKS</th>
<th>TASK ELEMENTS</th>
<th>ESSENTIAL OR MARGINAL?</th>
<th>KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS &amp; ABILITIES</th>
<th>MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS</th>
<th>SERVICE POSITION CONDITIONS/ENVIRONMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
## SERVICE DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE 2

### (1) SITE INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Description &amp; Mission</th>
<th>Site Name &amp; Locations</th>
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<tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Site Supervisor Contact Information</th>
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### (2) SERVICE DESCRIPTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Title</th>
<th>Service Activities &amp; Responsibilities</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Goals</th>
<th>Position Requirements &amp; Qualifications</th>
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### (3) LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Expected Work Schedule</th>
<th>Orientation Plan</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Additional Information (Parking, Transportation, Id, Etc.)</th>
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</table>
## SERVICE DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION TITLE</th>
<th>IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR &amp; TITLE</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
<th>E-MAIL</th>
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### MAIN PURPOSE OF THIS POSITION

### LOCATION(S) WHERE SERVICE WILL BE PERFORMED

MACHINES, TOOLS, ELECTRONIC DEVICES, COMMUNICATION DEVICES, SOFTWARE & OTHER TOOLS TYPICALLY USED TO ACCOMPLISH THE TASKS OF THIS POSITION

EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE OR SPECIALIZED TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

### POSITION DUTIES:

Describe the nature and level of work being performed within this position by listing essential and marginal functions and their related tasks, starting with those that are the most important. This does not need to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and tasks.

#### % OF TIME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DUTIES &amp; TASKS – ESSENTIAL TASKS (that are fundamental and critical to the performance of this position)</th>
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<tr>
<td>% OF TIME</td>
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#### % OF TIME

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<tr>
<th>DUTIES &amp; TASKS – MARGINAL TASKS (that are intermittently performed but their removal would alter the purpose or the position)</th>
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<td>% OF TIME</td>
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<tr>
<td>Item</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>IS A LICENSE REQUIRED TO PERFORM THE ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THIS POSITION?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS THIS POSITION SUBJECT TO A BACKGROUND CHECK?</td>
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<tr>
<td>IS THIS POSITION SUBJECT TO TESTING?</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAN ATTENDANCE HOURS BE ADJUSTED?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST EXAMPLES OF WRITTEN MATERIALS (i.e. correspondence, reports) THAT THE PERSON IN THIS POSITION WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PRODUCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOES THE PERSON IN THIS POSITION PERFORM ANY OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION? IF SO, GIVE EXAMPLES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GATHER INFORMATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDENTIFY KEY ISSUES</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANALYZE THE IMPACT OF ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIST CONTACTS WITH OTHERS (internal &amp; external) &amp; DESCRIBE PURPOSE &amp; FREQUENCY OF CONTACT (daily, weekly, occasionally)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAME/TITLE/ORGANIZATION</td>
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section II

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS
Laws that Govern National & Community Service Programs on the Inclusion of People with Disabilities

Civil rights affect almost every area of American life and require that equally opportunity be provided. In terms of people with disabilities, several federal laws ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1972 to name two of these laws.

National service programs are obligated under federal law to ensure non-discriminatory environments and practices and procedures for qualified persons with disabilities. In most cases, if a program is truly open to the full inclusion of people with disabilities and to the creation of respectful and inclusive service environment, that program is likely to be in legal compliance.

Basics of the Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law in July 1990. The law guarantees full participation in American society for all people with disabilities, just as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 guaranteed the rights of all people regardless of race, sex, national origin, or religion. The ADA covers every person with an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Title I of the ADA prohibits private employers (with 15 or more employees) state and local governments, employment agencies and labor unions from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions and privileges of employment.

An individual with a disability is a person who:
• Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such impairment.

A qualified employee or applicant with a disability is an individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job in question. Reasonable accommodation may include, but is not limited to:
• Adjusting or making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities;

• Job restructuring;
• Modified work schedules;
• Reassignment to a vacant position;
• Acquiring or modifying equipment or devices;
• Adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, or policies; and/or
• Providing qualified readers or interpreters.

An employer is required to make an accommodation for the known disability of a qualified applicant or employee if it would not impose an “undue hardship” on the operation of the employer’s business. Undue hardship is defined as an action requiring significant difficulty or expense when considered in light of factors such as an employer’s size, financial resources and the nature and structure of its operation. An employer is not required to lower quality or production standards to make an accommodation, nor is an employer obligated to provide personal use items such as glasses or hearing aids.

Employers may not ask job applicants about the existence, nature or severity of a disability. Applicants may be asked about their ability to perform specific job functions. A job offer may be conditioned on the results of a medical examination, but only if the examination is required for all entering employees in similar jobs.

Medical examinations of employees must be job related and consistent with the employer’s business needs.

Employees and applicants currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs are not covered by the ADA, when an employer acts on the basis of such use. Tests for illegal drugs are not subject to the ADA’s restrictions on medical examinations. Employers may hold illegal drug users and alcoholics to the same performance standards as other employees.

Title II of the ADA prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in all programs, activities, and services of public entities. It applies to all State and local governments, their departments and agencies, and any other instrumentalities or special-purpose districts of State or local governments.

Title III of the ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by “private entities” operating places of “public accommodation.” Businesses governed by Title III include banks, restaurants, supermarkets, hotels, shopping centers, privately-owned sports arenas, movie theaters, private day care centers, schools and colleges, accountant or insurance offices, lawyers’ and doctors’ offices, museums and health clubs.
Basics of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that “no otherwise qualified individuals with a disability in the United States...shall solely, by reason of [her or] his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance...”

Section 504 applies to any entity that receives federal assistance, including grant funds, services of federally sponsored participants, or federally subsidized trainings. While some entities, such as tribal governments or religious organizations, may be exempt from certain federal non-discrimination requirements, Section 504 does not include any exemptions – any entity that receives assistance from the OVCS must certify that it will comply with Section 504.

Programs and activities covered by Section 504 must be accessible to people with disabilities, and recipients must provide reasonable accommodations to allow a qualified person with a disability to receive services, participate in the entities programs, or perform the essential function of a position. Section 504 does not require grantees to take any action that would result in a ‘fundamental alteration’ in the nature of a program or activity or that would cause an ‘undue financial or administrative burden.’ It is recommended that you contact the Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC) at (800) 949-4232 or www.adata.org when determining undue financial burden.

There are some temporary or specific conditions that are excluded from coverage under Section 504:
• temporary disabilities (broken arm, seasonal allergies)
• specific conditions (transsexualism, compulsive gambling, homosexuality, psychoactive substance abuse resulting from current illegal use of drugs)

Again, it is recommended that you contact the DBTAC when determining whether a person with a disability falls within a covered or uncovered category under the ADA or Section 504.

The Corporation for National & Community Service published regulations (45 CFR Part 1232) specific to Section 504 for entities that receive OVCS assistance. The regulations, including provisions on the selection and supervision of employees and service participants, reasonable accommodations, and program accessibility, can be found at www.nationalservice.org.

Other Federal and State Statutes

The Genetics Information Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination based on genetic information. And, both national service laws, the National and Community Service Act (NCSA) and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA), prohibit an individual with a responsibility for the operation of a grantee’s project from discriminating on the basis of disability against a qualified person with a disability who is a participant or staff member.

In Virginia, companies with one or more employees are subject to the state’s antidiscrimination law. And, it is illegal to discriminate against an employee because their child or spouse has a disability. For more information, the Virginia Human Rights Council enforces state antidiscrimination law in the Commonwealth (804-225-2292 or www.chr.state.va.us), and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission enforces federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or employee because of disability (800-669-4000 or www.eeoc.gov).

There are also statutes or federal policies that provide financial incentives for hiring people with disabilities:
• The Disabled Access Credit – provides a non-refundable credit for small business that incur expenditures for the purpose of providing access to people with disabilities. Eligible small businesses are those that earn less than $1 million and have no more than 30 full time employees. The credit can be used for costs such as sign language interpreters, purchase of adaptive equipment, and production of print material in alternate formats.
• The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) (formerly known as the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit program) – provides a tax credit up to 40% of the first $6,000 of wages of a new employee if they are part of a certain targeted group. The credit is available once the employee has worked for at least 120 hours or 90 days.
• Barriers Removal Tax Deduction – encourages businesses of any size to remove architectural and transportation barriers to the mobility of people with disabilities. Businesses may claim a deduction of up to $15,000 a year for qualified expenses such as providing accessible parking spaces or ramps, providing a restroom that is accessible to people using wheelchairs, and making walkways at least 48 inches wide.

More information about federal Tax benefits can be found at www.irs.gov.
section III

RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT & RETENTION OF STAFF, SERVICE MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS WITH DISABILITIES
RECRUITING

Disability is a natural condition of the human experience. One out of five Americans have a disability, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Fifty percent of all people will have some type of disability during their lifetime, and almost everyone will know or care about someone who has or will have a disability. Each person’s unique gifts, talents, needs and contributions add to the richness of the whole community. Staff, service member of volunteer positions should be reflective of the diversity of the community - everyone can and should have the opportunity to take part in important daily activities that add to a person’s growth, development, fulfillment, and community contribution.

How Do I Successfully Recruit People with Disabilities in National and Community Service?

There are two basic approaches to recruitment of people with disabilities as staff, service members or volunteers in your program. The first is to recruit people with disabilities as part of your overall recruitment process. This will happen naturally as your program becomes increasingly accessible and inclusive. The second approach is to conduct specific outreach activities with communities of people with disabilities and organizations that serve these communities.

How Can I Make Recruitment Activities Inclusive?

The first step toward inclusive recruitment is creating an inclusive service environment. An inclusive service environment is one that proactively seeks to include persons with disabilities, ensures that everyone can make a valued contribution, and weaves access and accommodations into all aspects of the program. There are several ways that you can ensure that your recruitment activities are inclusive:

- Include images of people with disabilities as service providers in brochures, videos, and other materials.
- Make sure that any videos you produce are captioned and audio-described.
- Make a clear statement of your willingness to provide accommodations. Example Sample Statement: Qualified individuals with disabilities who need accommodations may make arrangements by contacting (insert your program contact person and number/email).
- Familiarize your staff with your state relay services or your TDD/TTY number.
- Insert a non-discrimination clause in all written material.
- Proactively let the public know that you will provide materials in alternate formats. Example Sample Statement: This document and others are available in alternate formats.
- Ensure that your website is accessible (good information on how to incorporate accessibility features on your website can be found at www.cast.org).
- Be sure your application forms ask no questions regarding disabilities, history of disabilities (applicant or their family), or other medical information- unless it requests a voluntary response that is separated, filed separately and used for statistical purposes only.
- Identify organizations or individuals in your community with disability experience who can review materials to ensure that your language is appropriate.
- Hold meetings and events in locations that are barrier free, and let people know the events are accessible. (example sample statement: The AmeriCorps kickoff event will be held in an accessible location. Other accommodations will be provided upon request. Please contact (insert your program contact person and number/email)).

Where Can I Recruit People with Disabilities?

The simple answer is, “wherever people live, work, and hang out in the community is where you will find people with disabilities.” People with disabilities are in every community, organization, and neighborhood. Disability crosses all demographic groups. People with disabilities are young and old, rich, poor and middle-class, highly educated and not. Some individuals with disabilities are very committed to service; while others have never been exposed to service. Some have not had a lot of experience working alongside people without disabilities; others have. There are organizations and programs in every community, as well as at the national level, which work with people with disabilities. Many are federally operated and/or funded. Some provide services to people with disabilities such as therapies or training. Others advocate in the community for increased accessibility. Some provide scholarships and awards, while others provide funding for education or job training. Some organizations serve a range of individuals with different kinds of disabilities, while others focus on one or two specific kinds of disabilities. Depending on your program and the organizations in your community, the following kinds of organizations may be appropriate for your recruitment efforts:

- Schools, Colleges, and Technical Schools
- Vocational Rehabilitation Offices
- Disability Organizations
- Support Groups
- Civic Groups
- Senior Organizations
- Youth Organizations with Programs for Youth with Disabilities
- State and Federally Funded Community and National Resources

There are also several free national recruitment resources provided either directly by the federal government or through federal grants. While they exist primarily to help persons with disabilities find employment, you may be able to use them to identify people with disabilities who are open to service opportunities. Some provide you directly with resumes or job-related information about people with disabilities, while others work in conjunction with state and local agencies. These include the resources listed below; more complete information about them is
Are There Organizations in My Community That Can Help Me Recruit Individuals with Disabilities?

Almost all colleges and universities have an office of disability supports and services for students with disabilities. Staff in these offices can provide information about your program to students with a range of disabilities. Many have bulletin boards where you can post information. Some have campus-wide newsletters. Visit the websites for the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (www.schev.edu/students/collegelistalpha.asp) and the Virginia Community College System (www.vccs.edu/Collegelocator/tabid/201/Default.aspx) to search two and four year colleges in Virginia and the disability supports provided.

School districts have offices on special education. These offices are aware of all students identified with disabilities, including those who are fully mainstreamed in their classrooms. In addition, most schools have special education teachers who know students with disabilities well. For a directory of school divisions and contact information, visit http://www.doe.virginia.gov/directories/schools/school_info_by_regions.shtml.

Each state has an office of vocational rehabilitation that in turn has local offices. Vocational rehabilitation counselors, who assist people with disabilities in achieving educational and vocational goals, staff these offices. Counselors will know of people with disabilities who may be interested in service programs. In addition, there are instances where national and community service programs may become part of a vocational plan, in which case additional supports may be available from vocational rehabilitation programs. For more information, visit www.vadrs.org.

Even the smallest community has at least one or two organizations that work with people with disabilities from the very young to the very old. Here are some of the most common:

- Parent Resource Centers
- Centers for Independent Living
- National Mental Health Association affiliates
- United Cerebral Palsy affiliates
- Arc affiliates
- Brain Injury Association affiliates
- National Association of the Deaf groups
- Lighthouses (visually disability)
- Easter Seals affiliates
- Autism Society Chapters
- Down Syndrome Associations

In addition, most communities have support or self-help groups for a variety of issues that people face in their lives. Often, self-help groups are listed in local papers.

Many civic groups, youth organizations and senior organizations also support disability issues and may conduct fundraising activities on behalf of scholarship programs or under special circumstances. Some are:

- Civitans
- Kiwanis
- Lions
- Quota Clubs
- Boy and Girl Scouts
- 4-H
- Campfire programs
- YMCA/YWCA
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Senior Centers
- AARP

Another resource that allows people with disabilities to locate and contact you is the Corporation for National and Community Service recruitment web site: www.nationalservice.org. We encourage you to post your national service positions there. Consider national job websites – www.monster.com and www.nationjob.com to name a few, which take prospective job applicants to job listings on the Internet. And, visit the disability run organization map maintained by the Virginia Center for Disability Leadership at www.virginiaselfadvocacy.org.
Interviewing and Service Selection

The interview and selection process for staff, members, and volunteers is an area that has many legal do's and don'ts and can be intimidating for program staff. In most cases when errors are made they are not because of an intent to discriminate, but because the interviewer wants to help, desires more information, or wants to clarify information. An inclusive interview and selection process focuses on what a person can contribute to his or her community through service and what the program can bring to the individual. The existence of a disability is a secondary consideration.

Can I Ask Disability-Related Questions or Request Medical Information as Part of My Selection Process?

No. You may not ask disability-related questions and you may not request medical information prior to offering the position to the applicant. There are very specific rules to protect persons with disabilities. These rules protect the rights of all persons and allow applicants to be assessed on merit alone. An inclusive manager focuses on an applicant’s abilities to perform the essential functions and not on speculation about possible disabilities.

An interview is often a conversation, and conversations with different applicants will often cover topics in different ways. It is important, however, to ask ALL applicants the SAME questions. This will help ensure that you do not inadvertently obtain information from one applicant that you do not obtain from all applicants.

During the interview, focus on questions regarding the ability of an applicant to perform the essential functions of the position with or without accommodations. Even if an applicant has a visible disability, do not make assumptions about his or her ability or the accommodations that he or she will need.

In rare instances, service programs will require medical examinations of applicants. In no instance may you require a medical exam prior to an offer of a position, but your offer may be contingent on the results of a medical exam. If you require a medical examination after a contingent offer is made, you must require it of every applicant offered similar positions. You may not require one only for persons with disabilities or persons you might think have disabilities. You will need to justify any disqualification based on the results of the medical examinations as job-related and consistent with business necessity.

Some programs require a medical examination or drug testing before participants are allowed to serve. If you require such testing, all applicants must take the test. In other words, you cannot test some applicants and not others. If you are unsure of any of this information, it is strongly recommended that you seek additional technical assistance from the Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC) at (800) 949-4232 or www.datal.org or the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) at (800) 526-7234 or www.askjan.org.

What Do I Do If an Applicant Raises the Issue of His or Her Disability or Requests Accommodations During the Interview?

If accommodations are requested for the interview, you may make sufficient inquiries to enable you to provide the accommodations for the interview. Such accommodations are provided to enable equal opportunity to interview. Accommodations that may be required to perform the essential functions of the service position should not be discussed at this point.

If an applicant has a visible disability or, during or prior to the interview, he or she discloses a disability or a need for accommodation to perform the essential functions of the position, it is not advisable to pursue the issue at this point and you cannot consider this in your selection decision. A response might be, “We are an inclusive project that encourages participation by all persons with the skills and abilities to do the job, and we provide needed accommodations.”

General Questions that you can ask:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- Tell me about your interests.
- What do you see yourself doing in 5 years?

General Questions that you cannot ask:

- Tell me about your disability.
- Describe any physical or mental problems or disabilities you have.
- Have you ever received Worker’s Compensation, SSDI or SSI?
- Are you taking prescribed drugs?
- Have you ever been hospitalized?
- How many days were you absent from work for illness last year?

Questions about performing essential functions that you can ask:

- Are you able to perform the essential functions of this position with or without reasonable accommodation?
  (Note: This question should be answered with a yes or a no response. The applicant is not required to disclose if an accommodation is needed.)
**MANAGEMENT & RETENTION**

Are there different strategies or approaches for managing people with disabilities?

No. Managing people with disabilities in an inclusive service environment is the same as managing effectively in any environment. Staff, service members, or volunteers with disabilities, like any other person, have valuable talents, skills, time, and enthusiasm to contribute to the betterment of their communities. Given inclusive environments and accommodations, those contributions will shine through.

You should expect to use the following management tasks both with people with and without disabilities:
- develop expectations;
- write service description;
- provide training;
- implement policies and procedures;
- support professional development; and
- evaluate performance.

**What Performance Expectations Should I Have of People with Disabilities?**

Managers and supervisors should take care to ensure that they have the same performance expectations of their staff, service members or volunteers with disabilities as they do of everyone. Having the same expectations of all staff, service members or volunteers is a key contributing factor to an inclusive service environment.

By the same token, however, take care not to have greater expectations of people with disabilities. People with disabilities face the same issues, frustrations, and bad days as anyone else.

In some cases, poor performance may warrant verbal warnings or disciplinary action. If the staff, service members or volunteer that you are disciplining has a disability that should not affect your approach to discipline. People with disabilities are as accountable as anyone else.

**What Conduct Expectations Should I Have of People with Disabilities?**

Managers and supervisors should take care to ensure that they hold their staff, service members, or volunteers with disabilities to the same standards of conduct as they expect of all their participants. If you expect your staff, service members or volunteers to not be impaired by alcohol or illegal substances during service hours, have that same expectation of a person with disabilities. Even though addictions to legal substances may be protected disabilities, they are not an excuse for violations of your rules of conduct.

There are some disabilities that can impact an individual’s ability to interact with others, to control emotions, or to judge social and work situations appropriately. Inappropriate behavior, however, is not a disability, although it can be a condition of a disability. If an individual has disclosed a disability that may result in inappropriate behavior, you should discuss accommodations and strategies for ensuring that any behavior is not disruptive to your program. Each situation needs to be dealt with on its own. If a person has not disclosed such a disability, you would handle this behavioral issue as you would with any other participant. For more information on positive behavior supports in Virginia, please visit [http://www.partnership.vcu.edu/Challenging_Behaviors_PBS.html](http://www.partnership.vcu.edu/Challenging_Behaviors_PBS.html).

**What If I Am Taking Disciplinary Action and the Participant Raises the Issue of Disability?**

In rare instances, an individual who is receiving disciplinary action as a result of poor performance or misconduct may reveal a disability only when he/she realizes that their disability is impacting their success in the program. You should consider opening the process of providing effective accommodations at this point. If you make an accommodation, you should give ample time to determine if the accommodation is successful and if the participant’s performance or conduct has improved. Do not hesitate to contact the Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC) at (800) 949-4232 or [www.adata.org](http://www.adata.org) or the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) at (800) 526-7234 or [www.askjan.org](http://www.askjan.org) for more assistance.
How Can I Effectively Retain Staff, Service Members and Volunteers with Disabilities?

Retaining staff, service members or volunteers is a challenge for programs regardless of whether the person has a disability or not. Effective retention not only requires that staff, service members or volunteers are satisfied and rewarded, but also that their experience is positive and there is a sense of excitement and fun. Many of the strategies and principles of retention for any staff, service member or volunteer are true for people with disabilities. Rather than consider retention of staff, service members or volunteers with disabilities as a separate and discrete issue, consider possible issues in the same context as any other. Creativity, flexibility, and a willingness to negotiate responsibly will benefit you, your program, and staff, service members or volunteers with and without disabilities.

For staff, service members or volunteers with disabilities, an inclusive service environment, effective accommodations, and open communication are critical to retention. There are some strategies that you can undertake to ensure that people with disabilities are successful in your program and are able to successfully complete their term of service:

- Create and maintain a truly inclusive service environment.
- Hold participants with disabilities to the same levels of accountability as other staff, service member or volunteers.
- Develop clear expectations and hold staff, service member or volunteers to these expectations.
- Keep the lines of communication clear and open.
- Develop clear position descriptions that outline tasks, essential functions, and expectations.
- Take action when you see that a staff or service member, or volunteer is not participating.

For those issues that may arise that are specific to disability (i.e., the provision of accommodations and truly including an individual with a disability in service), you may need to approach situations with creativity.

How Do I Identify a Potential Retention Problem?

As you think about specific issues regarding retention, be sure to evaluate the issue at hand to determine whether it is a retention issue specific to disability, or whether the staff or service member, or volunteer is facing issues not at all related to disability. This is an important first step because it will help clearly identify the issues that are at hand.

Staff, service members or volunteers are more likely to complete their service assignments when the following exists:

- They perceive that what they are doing is valuable.
- They receive appropriate equipment and support.
- There is a feeling of belonging.
- There are opportunities for personal growth.
- Mutual expectations are met.
- They are being treated as part of a team.
- They are being challenged.

Staff, Service Members or Volunteers are Less Likely to Complete Their Service Assignments When the Following Exists:

- They perceive they are given “busy work” assignments.
- There is a lack of appropriate accommodations or inconsistent or unreliable accommodations.
- There is a failure to recognize the importance of participation; saying “Just sit this one out.”
- Assignments are “dead-ends.”
- They perceive a lack of effective and open communication.
- They feel that they are being ignored.
- There is unwarranted praise that can be perceived as insincere.

When Can I Ask Disability-Related Questions or Require Documentation of a Disability?

There may be times when a staff or service member, or a volunteer requests accommodations but you are unclear about his or her functional limitations. There may be other times when you observe performance problems and you have reason to believe that a participant’s ability to perform essential service functions is affected by a medical condition. Or, you believe that what appears to be the person’s medical problem could pose a direct threat to the health or safety of himself or others. In these instances, you may ask the person limited disability-related questions or request a limited amount of reasonable documentation about the nature of the disability and its functional limitations as it relates to the essential functions of the position. This can be a complex area and it is sometimes hard to see the issues clearly. Do not hesitate to call upon the Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC) at (800) 949-4232 or www.adata.org or the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) at (800) 526-7234 or www.askjan.org for more assistance.

Other Resources Include:

- National Service Inclusion Program (NSIP) www.nsip.org
- EEOC’s Enforcement Guidance: Disability-Related Inquiries and Medical Examinations of Employees Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (July 2000) available at www.eeoc.gov
Take Action

Educate Yourself

1. Before moving ahead, study the issue of diverse service corps/workforce, including service members or employees with disabilities
2. Learn more about people with disabilities by contacting your local Arc chapter or disability-related organizations for a meet & greet
3. Contact your local Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services office or Center for Independent Living for free training and information
4. Talk to people with disabilities already involved in your organization and ask for their ideas and input

Develop a Plan

5. Establish a system for educating and sensitizing all levels of your organization’s service corps/workforce on the value of hiring people with disabilities
6. Ensure that service corps members/employees with disabilities are included in any diversity training offered by your organization
7. When a position is approved for posting, send to organizations that support people with disabilities
8. When providing training or other off-site activities, make sure that they are accessible to people with disabilities
9. Monitor appraisal/evaluation procedures so service corps members/employees with disabilities are treated without discrimination

The U.S. Business Leadership Network (USBLN) and the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) announced plans to establish the “Disability Equality Index,” a national disability benchmarking tool for employers who want to know how their company’s disability inclusion and accessibility policies and practices stack up against those of other businesses. The new tool to use for benchmarking will be released in 2013. Visit [http://www.shrm.org/hrdisciplines/diversity/articles/pages/disability-benchmarking-tool.aspx](http://www.shrm.org/hrdisciplines/diversity/articles/pages/disability-benchmarking-tool.aspx) for more information.

Sources: World Institute on Disability, Disability Demonstration Project Oakland, CA
section IV

ACCOMMODATIONS
You are urged to reach out to members who can contribute a diverse set of perceptions, skills, and life experiences to the program team. In all cases, your selection process must be based on the qualifications of the applicants and whether or not they can perform the essential project activities, with or without reasonable accommodation of their mental or physical disabilities. Programs and activities must be accessible to people with disabilities, and you must provide reasonable accommodation to the known mental or physical disabilities of otherwise qualified members, service recipients, applicants, and program staff.

You must make all selections and project assignments without regard to the need to provide reasonable accommodation. You are not asked to enroll individuals who are unqualified or who pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others (that cannot be eliminated through reasonable accommodation), nor are you required to make accommodations that are unduly burdensome or will alter your program design fundamentally. However, you must prove and document any such findings or decisions.

**What Are Accommodations?**

Accommodations refer to all of the technology, services and changes in policy, procedure, and the built environment that enable people with disabilities to perform essential functions or to equally participate in events and programs. In other words, accommodations are alterations that make it possible for a person with a disability to do the same job as everyone else, but in a slightly different way.

Accommodations vary depending on the person’s needs, the disability, the program, the resources available, and the tasks that need to be completed. The may be simple adaptations (i.e., screen reader software, laminated cards with sequential job tasks) or may require sophisticated equipment (i.e., a Braille printer, eye gaze technology). The U.S. Department of Labor reports that most job accommodations cost less than $600.

The chart below provides common accommodation categories specified in the ADA and some low cost examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Restructuring</td>
<td>Adjustments to work procedures or to the order in which tasks are usually performed</td>
<td>Change work schedule; rearrange the order in which tasks are done; decrease number of non-essential job duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistive Devices</td>
<td>Objects that help an employee do the job or complete tasks with greater ease or independence</td>
<td>Electric stapler; non-skid material/surface; voice activated software; picture schedule of job tasks; lever instead of knob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Teaching methods that help an employee learn/re-learn job duties</td>
<td>Large print instructions; demonstrate different ways to perform a task; video of someone doing the job; use an interpreter to communicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Assistance</td>
<td>Person who helps an employee with job duties, work routines, or work-related aspects of a job</td>
<td>Co-worker helps with tasks; mentor provides training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Modifications</td>
<td>Alterations to the physical environment that allow safe and equal access to facilities</td>
<td>Raised letters on elevators and signs; flashing lights on fire alarms and telephones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Reassignment</td>
<td>Temporary or permanent task transfers between co-workers or sharing jobs with other employees</td>
<td>Swap task with a co-worker; reassign task to another employee; job share with a co-worker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When Do I Need to Provide Accommodations?

Once an individual requests an accommodation, you should evaluate your ability to provide that accommodation. The first step is to talk to the person – find out what functional limitations exist and what essential functions need to be accomplished or what barrier exists to participation in the program or activity. In many cases individuals will know what they need and how to secure it. In some cases, individuals will not be certain what they will need. There are several resources that you can call upon to assist you and the individual in evaluating appropriate and effective accommodations:

- Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs) (800-949-9232 or www.adata.org).
- Job Accommodation Network (JAN) (800-526-7234 or www.askjan.org).

Action Steps

1. Review the Job Accommodation Network website (www.askjan.org).
2. Contact your local Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services office for training or information on accommodations.
3. Search for different types of accommodations that are frequently used by people with disabilities (www.askjan.org/soar/index.htm).
5. Visit your regional Virginia Department of Education Training & Technical Assistance Center to view sample assistive technology devices (www.ttaonline.com).
CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT: A HANDBOOK FOR INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS

To view the Handbook, visit http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/handbook/.
appendix B

DISABILITY BENEFITS OVERVIEW
INTRODUCTION

Depending on the type of service program and the type of government benefits, there may be a risk that participating in a service program might jeopardize an individual’s eligibility for government benefits. An effective and inclusive program manager will be aware of these concerns and will be able to direct individuals to appropriate resources for assistance. These benefits that may be affected include the educational award and/or the monthly stipend, both of which are described below. The benefits listed below were updated in 2012 – please note that benefits may change based on federal or state budgets and laws.

AmeriCorps participants are eligible to receive an educational award after the completion of a specified time of service. Educational awards must be applied to college tuition, vocational training or outstanding college loans. AmeriCorps must pay the educational award directly to an educational institution or to a loan holder for repayment. Educational awards are considered wages but are subject to the income exclusion allowed for grants, scholarships and fellowships. This means that any portion of a grant, scholarship or fellowship used for paying tuition, fees, or other necessary educational expenses is excluded from income for Social Security Income beneficiaries considered “students.” This exclusion does not apply to any portion set aside or actually used for food, clothing, or shelter. For general questions about the Education Award and student loan deferment, contact the National Service Trust at (888) 507-5962 or www.americorps.gov/studentloandeferment.

Participation in Learn and Serve America activities also should have no effect on an individual’s eligibility for any government assistance program. Because the “income disregard” rule in the current National Community Service Act is narrower than the Domestic Volunteers Service Act rules, other AmeriCorps participants (including AmeriCorps, Tribal Territories, Education Award, Promise Fellow, and National Civilian Community Corps) who receive government benefits need to proceed with caution.

Participant benefits in AmeriCorps may not affect an individual’s eligibility for the benefits such as food stamps, HUD-subsidized housing, Veterans’ benefits, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and other need-based federal or federally assisted programs (except a program supported under the Social Security Act or Federal student financial aid). However, participant benefits in AmeriCorps State/National programs may affect an individual’s eligibility for the following benefits such as Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Medicaid and Medicare, need-based Federal Student Financial Aid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Retired, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (SSDI), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and Unemployment Insurance.

OTHER BENEFITS

Child Care

The living allowance, as well as any other income is counted when applying for child care benefits with the Nation’s Network of Child Care Resource and Referral. Members must complete an application and obtain their Program Director’s signature. The package is sent to National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) in Washington, DC where it takes approximately 3-4 weeks to process. Decisions are based on income, size of household and area of residence. For more information, contact NACCRA at (202) 393-5501 or www.naccrra.org/americanpsvista/index.php

Child Support

According to the Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE), the living allowance is counted as income when the support determination is made. Gross monthly income, per Virginia Code §20-108.2, is defined as all income from all sources, and shall include but not be limited to, income from salaries, wage, commissions, royalties, bonuses, dividends, severance pay, pensions, interest, trust income, annuities, capital gains, social security benefits, workers compensation benefits, unemployment benefits, disability insurance benefits, veterans’ benefits, spousal support, rental income, gifts, prizes or awards. For more information, contact the DCSE statewide Customer Service Center at (800) 648-8894 or www.dss.virginia.gov/family/dcseoffices.cgi.
DISABILITY BENEFITS

Many people with disabilities receive government benefits, sometimes on the basis of their income eligibility, sometimes on the basis of their disability, and sometimes on the basis of both. The Social Security Administration administers SSI and SSDI, and the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance program, or WIPA). In addition, a range of other federal, state, and local benefit programs provide housing assistance, transportation, and other services. Often, these government benefits are critical to the ability of a person with a disability to remain self-sufficient. For more information, contact your local WIPA program at www.socialsecurity.gov/work/ServiceProviders/WIPADirectory.html

Family Access to Medical Insurance Security Plan

Family Access to Medical Insurance Security Plan (FAMIS) is a federal/state program that provides low-cost health insurance for children in families that earn too much for FAMIS Plus (Medicaid) but do not have private health insurance. FAMIS is Virginia’s health insurance program for children. It makes health care affordable for children of eligible families. FAMIS covers all the medical care growing children need to avoid getting sick, plus the medical care that will help them get better if they do get sick or get hurt. The stipend is counted as income when determining FAMIS eligibility. For more information, contact FAMIS at (866) 873-2647 or www.famis.org.

Federal Student Financial Aid

Students who will or currently receive financial aid should contact their college or school’s financial aid office. Financial aid offices often deal with Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and should be able to answer your eligibility questions. Worksheet C of FAFSA requests that you report “AmeriCorps benefits (awards, living allowances, and interest accrual payments)...” The AmeriCorps living allowance should be reported here so that the IRS may remove those benefits so they are subtracted from your taxable income. Therefore, the living allowance should not impact student financial aid. However, check first and verify your personal situation with your financial aid office. Ask the office about your EFC or Expected Family Contribution. For more information, contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at (800) 433-3243. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, is found at www.fafsa.ed.gov or www.fafsaonline.com

Federal Work-Study Programs

Students who will be or are currently involved in a work-study program should contact their college or school’s work-study program office for specific details. According to FAFSA, an individual’s work-study program should not be impacted by the AmeriCorps stipend. Worksheet C of the FAFSA requests that you report “Taxable earnings from need-based employment programs, such as Federal Work-Study and need-based employment portions of fellowships and assistantships.” The AmeriCorps living allowance should be reported here so that the IRS may remove those benefits so they are subtracted from your taxable income. Therefore, the living allowance should not impact a federal work-study program. However, check first and verify your personal situation with your school’s work-study program. Ask the office about EFC or Expected Family Contribution. For more information, see www.mapping-your-future.org/paying/workstud.htm or www.ed.gov/index.jhtml.

Food Stamps

Stipends are not counted as income for a food stamp calculation with one exception. If the payment is considered on-the-job training (OJT), it is counted as earned income unless the person receiving the OJT funds is 18 years or younger and living with a parent or an individual who has parental control. For more information, contact your local Department of Social Services.

General Relief

The GR Program or GR is an optional local program designed to provide assistance, either maintenance or emergency, which cannot be provided through other means. The GR Program is financed through state and local funding. Components of a local GR Program may include assistance for medical or dental services, burial expenses, assistance for unattached children and interim assistance. Regarding GR, funds remaining from a scholarship after all mandatory school expenses have been paid are to be counted as income. Living arrangements are not considered a mandatory school expense, but may affect balances from the Education Award.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (subsidized housing)

The mission of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is to increase homeownership, support community development and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination. There are vouchers through HUD for affordable housing for people with disabilities. For more information, visit: www.hud.gov
Medicaid

Medicaid is a joint program between federal and state governments to provide health care to people who have low income and who are elderly, disabled, or pregnant; and to low income families with children. There are two state sponsored health insurance programs in Virginia for children: FAMIS (state health insurance program) and FAMIS Plus (Medicaid). To be eligible for Medicaid, or FAMIS Plus, you must have limited income and resources and you must be in one of the groups of people covered by Medicaid. Medicaid also offers a Home & Community-Based Service program for people with disabilities that offer ‘Waivers’ to keep them out of institutions and nursing homes. AmeriCorps VISTA is the only program that disregards the AmeriCorps stipend as income. For more information regarding eligibility for Medicaid, FAMIS Plus or a Medicaid Waiver, or continuation of benefits, contact your local Department of Social Services.

Medicaid Works

In Virginia, Medicaid Works is an incentive program for people with disabilities who are employed or who want to go to work. Medicaid Works is a Medicaid option that enables workers with disabilities to earn high income (up to $44,000) and keep more in savings or resources while continuing to receive Medicaid coverage. For more information regarding Medicaid Works, contact your local Department of Social Services.

Medicare and/or other medical benefits

The federal health insurance program is for people 65 years of age or older, certain younger people with disabilities, and people with End-Stage Renal Disease (permanent kidney failure with dialysis or a transplant). For more information, contact (800) 633-4227 or www.medicare.gov.

Social Security

Administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA), Social Security is made up of three major programs called 1) Retirement, 2) Survivors, and 3) Disability.

- Retirement: This program provides a lifetime monthly income for qualified workers once they have reached their full retirement age. Depending on when they were born, that age ranges from 65 to 67. The amount of retirement benefits they get depends on their income while they were working. If they retire early, workers have the option of instead receiving a lower monthly income starting at age 62, instead of full retirement beginning at age 65 to 67.
- Survivors: This program provides a monthly lifetime income to the surviving spouse of a deceased worker once the surviving spouse reaches retirement age. The amount that he or she receives depends on both spouses’ income while they were working. The survivors program also pays benefits to children under the age of 18 and a surviving spouse caring for them. These benefits end in most cases when the surviving children reach age 18.
- Disability: Social Security also pays lifetime income to workers who are disabled and in some cases to their spouses and children under the age of 18. These benefits depend on the worker’s earning history.

For more information and to locate the local SSA office nearest to you, contact (800) 772-1213 www.ssa.gov.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

The Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI) makes cash assistance payments to aged, blind and disabled people (including children under age 18) who have limited income and resources. Since SSI is a need-based program, the Social Security Administration will consider stipends as income. The passage in 2008 of the HEART Act directed the SSA to ignore the AmeriCorps living allowance when determining eligibility for SSI. For more information and to locate the local SSA office nearest to you, contact (800) 772-1213 www.ssa.gov.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) is a federal income insurance program, administered by the SSA, which provides benefits to disabled or blind individuals who are “insured” by workers’ contributions to the Social Security trust fund. Benefits are based on prior work under Social Security. Eligibility for SSDI is based on a finding that an individual is disabled. In several cases, the SSA determined that an individual who was participating in AmeriCorps State/National was engaged in “substantial gainful activity” and therefore was no longer disabled. SSDI recipients need to be aware of this risk and that they may decrease this risk by taking advantage of SSA’s work incentive options and income exclusions. Even if an AmeriCorps member declines the living allowance, she/he should still consult with the Social Security Office. For more information and to locate the local SSA office nearest to you, contact (800) 772-1213 or www.ssa.gov.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program provides eligible families with a monthly cash payment to meet their basic needs. Parents are eligible to receive benefits if they meet income requirements and if their children are:

- Under age 18, or if 18, will graduate from high school before age 19
- Going to school regularly if he is between the ages of five and 18
- Living with a parent or other relative
- A U.S. citizen or an eligible immigrant

The living allowance is counted as income in determining eligibility for TANF. For more information, contact your local Department of Social Services or visit http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/tanf/.
Ticket to Work
The Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program is an employment program for people with disabilities who are interested in going to work. The Ticket Program is part of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 – legislation designed to remove many of the barriers that previously influenced people’s decisions about going to work because of the concerns over losing health care coverage. The goal of the Ticket Program is to increase opportunities and choices for Social Security disability beneficiaries to obtain employment, vocational rehabilitation, and other support services from public and private providers, employers, and other organizations. For more information, www.yourtickettowork.com.

Unemployment Compensation
AmeriCorps members are NOT entitled to unemployment. They are NOT considered employees for the purpose of receiving unemployment compensation. Pursuant to the AmeriCorps Provisions, Section B.11.d.iv. (p. 25) “The U.S. Department of Labor ruled on April 20, 1995 that federal unemployment compensation law does not require coverage for members because no employer-employee relationship exists.”

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and GI Benefits
Have a question? Contact the VA Health Benefits Service Center toll free at (877) 222-8387 www.va.gov/healtheligibility/. For information on GI benefits, visit www.gibill.va.gov.

Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
Women, Infants and Children assistance or WIC is administered by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). The living allowance is NOT counted as income for determining eligibility. For more information on Virginia’s WIC program, contact the Virginia Department of Health at (888) 942-3663 or www.vahealth.org/wic/.

Workforce Investment Act
The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) offers a comprehensive mix of workforce development activities benefiting employers, incumbent workers, job seekers, laid-off workers, youth, veterans, new workforce entrants, and persons with disabilities. WIA’s objective is to promote and improve participants’ employment, job retention, earnings, and occupational skills. WIA has three funding streams serving the following three distinct customer populations:
- Adults
- Dislocated Workers
- Youth (older youth ages 19–21, younger youth ages 14–18)

While there are some similarities among funding streams, it is important to understand the differences. The WIA law and regulations clearly define and set specific parameters for the three customer populations, which have different employment services and corresponding eligibility criteria. For a WIA overview, visit www.wwn.virginia.gov/ or www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/act.cfm. For more information, contact the Virginia Employment Commission, WIA Unit, at 804-225-3285 or www.wwn.virginia.gov/#WIA_QnA.

Worker’s Compensation
As of April 2004, AmeriCorps members are deemed to be employees of the Commonwealth of Virginia for purposes of the Workers’ Compensation Act. The Act states that AmeriCorps members shall be eligible for reimbursement for medical costs from covered injuries, but shall not be eligible to receive weekly compensation. For more information, visit www.workerscompensation.com/virginia.php.

Take Action
1. Inform all applicants or participants to check first with their Local Department of Social Services at http://www.dss.virginia.gov/localagency/index.html to determine if they are eligible for benefits and/or if AmeriCorps awards/stipends may impact their eligibility for benefits/
2. Inform all applicants or participants that guidance is available regarding the relationship between participation and eligibility for government benefits.
3. Encourage participants to notify the government benefits agency (e.g., Social Security Administration) that they will be participating in service to identify any potential problems as well as ways to address those problems.
4. Develop working relationships with local Social Security offices and with local organizations to raise the level of awareness among all involved about ways to ensure that participation in national service will not result in a loss or reduction in disability benefits.
Overview

Discussions about accessibility frequently emphasize facilities and equipment - the “physical” factors that make a program accessible. There are many checklists that programs can use to assess their compliance with legal requirements for structures and devices.

Accessibility of programs is less concrete and readily visible but equally important. For example, staff have the knowledge to use TTY machines or request interpreters; information for people with disabilities is available in a variety of formats and presented in a clear, understandable fashion; emergency procedures take account of people with disabilities; and in general, people with disabilities are able to equally access the programs and organizations in which they serve.

Under the law, it is not sufficient to simply respond to requests for assistance and accommodations from people with disabilities. When national and community service programs are designed, they are required to proactively anticipate the needs of people with various physical, mental, and sensory disabilities. This checklist provides guidelines for accessibility. Through the use of this checklist, national and community service programs can help ensure they:

- comply with the law (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act)
- create an environment that makes people with disabilities feel welcome; and
- design programs and services so that people with disabilities can fully participate.

This is a tool for being honest about the level of your program’s accessibility to persons with disabilities. It is not intended to be punitive, but rather to be used as a planning tool. Complete the following section by answering each question by checking the appropriate box for “yes” or “no.” A box is available to list action steps, if necessary. After completing the assessment, consider prioritizing action steps for future organizational or programmatic planning. Keep a copy with other program records to be shared during monitoring visits by AmeriCorps program officers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAFF KNOWLEDGE</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ACTION STEPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff recognize the importance of making people with disabilities feel welcome.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff have had basic awareness training on how to meet the needs of volunteers and members with disabilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff understand requirements to provide reasonable accommodations to volunteers and members or potential volunteers and members with disabilities, unless determined that providing such an accommodation would cause an undue hardship.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Staff understand the obligations of CNCS funded programs under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, including:  
  • people with disabilities have the same rights as anyone else to access programs and become volunteers and members;  
  • services, programs and facilities must be readily accessible; &  
  • services and programs must be delivered in a setting that is as fully integrated as possible (meaning that volunteers and members with disabilities serve alongside volunteers and members who are not disabled). |     |    |              |
| Staff understand that they must make reasonable modifications in services and programs to avoid discrimination against people with disabilities, unless determined that making these modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the program/organization. |     |    |              |
| Staff understand that it is required to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services to ensure that communication with volunteers and members and potential volunteers and members with disabilities is as effective as communication with other individuals, unless this would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the service or activity. |     |    |              |
| Staff is aware that they cannot decide that an action, which would allow program access by a person with a disability, is unfeasible. Such decisions must be made by the designated senior staff member (or by consulting the CNCS EO Office and/or the National Service Inclusion Project). |     |    |              |
| Staff have been trained in emergency evacuation procedures for people with disabilities, including the evacuation of persons with mobility impairments. |     |    |              |
| Staff knows how to procure and use various equipment and materials for assisting people with disabilities, including the telecommunications device for the deaf (TT/TTY/TDD), accessible work stations, accessible materials, etc. |     |    |              |
### DISCLOSURE OF DISABILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ACTION STEPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When working with volunteers and members with disabilities, staff discuss the specific task and accommodations as it pertains to the individual's need to perform the essential functions of the position.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff who are working with volunteers and members with a disability get documented permission from the individual before discussing information about his/her disability with other staff or external individuals (e.g., service sites, other service agencies).</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>After documenting permission and specific information to be disclosed, when working with volunteers and members with disabilities, staff may provide information to other staff about an individual's disability only as needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private space is available for confidential discussion of disability-related issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All discussions about a disability between volunteers and/or members and other individuals take place in private; if discussions are by phone, calls are made in an area where the caller cannot be overheard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policies and procedures are in place, known to all, and disseminated to ensure that staff do not disclose information about a person's disability to others.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ACTION STEPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The program has documented procedures and guidelines for handling requests for reasonable accommodations and reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A staff member has been designated as a point person/resource to assist in accommodation requests, accessing external resources, and acquiring assistive technology or products.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program materials are accessible in a variety of formats</td>
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<tr>
<td>The program posts clear procedures for requesting reasonable accommodations and modifications in public areas, and includes them in writing in outreach materials.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Recruitment & Orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and orientation materials are accessible in a variety of formats.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Every volunteer and member is offered assistance completing forms and application materials.</td>
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<tr>
<td>When signing up for orientation or an interview, everyone is asked whether they will need assistance or accommodations to participate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>If a person needs assistance in filling out the application or other forms, this is done one-on-one in a private room, where the individual’s responses will not be overheard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information in an interview/orientation session is explained slowly and clearly, with plenty of time and opportunities for questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clearly understood procedures for requesting reasonable accommodations and modifications are included in writing and reviewed verbally.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A list of auxiliary aids and services for communication, assistive technology devices, and material in accessible formats is made available.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Welcoming Service Environment Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People with disabilities are in integrated settings; people with disabilities participate fully in all programs and activities alongside people without disabilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>All service members and volunteers are routinely asked if they will need some type of accommodations or special assistance to perform their service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All service members and volunteers are routinely offered the option of meeting with staff in private offices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information is presented in a way that is understandable to people who have limited or no reading skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information that is presented orally is also available in writing for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and for people whose learning style requires reinforcement of items in writing.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet work space is available for people to thoroughly read and comprehend information and materials.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### GENERAL COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ACTION STEPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The program has taken appropriate steps to ensure that communication with service members and volunteers (potential and current) with disabilities is as effective as communication with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff members ask all service members and volunteers if they need information in alternative formats, or need help understanding information.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials are accessible in a variety of formats.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff inform all service members and volunteers that accommodations are provided upon request.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The program has a procedure for responding to requests for auxiliary aids and services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The program has identified a source for language and sign language interpreters, and can respond in a timely manner to interpreter requests.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### MATERIALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ACTION STEPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The program has basic/essential materials in alternate formats (large print, Braille, audio-tape, text on computer, etc.) and has also identified resources to quickly obtain other materials in alternate formats upon request.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials are available in formats that account for a variety of learning styles, and are also accessible to people who have limited or no reading skills (e.g., pictures, videos, audio-tapes).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper materials are presented in contrasting colors (e.g., black and white).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Videos for service members and volunteers are closed-captioned.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program’s website is fully accessible to people with disabilities and “Bobby” approved. (<a href="http://www.cast.org/bobby">A free service that analyzes web pages for their accessibility to people with disabilities – www.cast.org/bobby</a>).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVACUATION PROCEDURES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>ACTION STEPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a mechanism for ensuring that people who are deaf or hard of hearing are aware of an activated fire or smoke alarm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is an established emergency evacuation procedure that addresses the needs of people with disabilities, including persons with mobility impairments.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARKETING MATERIALS &amp; OUTREACH</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ACTION STEPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing materials mention people with disabilities as one of the groups that are encouraged to apply.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures and graphics in marketing materials include positive images of people with disabilities as service members and volunteers.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program indicates that it is an “equal opportunity program” and that “accommodations are available upon request to individuals with disabilities” in recruitment brochures and other materials. These materials also indicate the telephone number of the program’s TDD/TTY or relay service.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>As part of its efforts to increase the number of service members and volunteers with disabilities, the programs do outreach to people with disabilities. This includes such activities as: • Advertising in media that targets people with disabilities • Sending notices about the program to community groups; organizations and associations in which people with disabilities participate; and • Consulting with community groups, organizations, and associations about ways in which the program can improve its outreach and services to people with disabilities.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Off-site presentations to the general public are held in locations that are fully accessible for people with disabilities.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECORD KEEPING REQUIREMENTS</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ACTION STEPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A policy has been established for maintaining the confidentiality of information about staff, service members or volunteers.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The disability status (when known) of all service members and volunteers and applicants is stored in a way that ensures confidentiality.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# PART 1. ENTRANCE ACCESSIBILITY

People with disabilities should be able to arrive on the site, approach the building, and enter the building as freely as anyone else. At least one path of travel should be safe and accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PATH OF TRAVEL</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ACTION STEPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is there a path of travel that does not require the use of stairs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the path of travel stable, firm, and slip-resistant?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the path at least 36 inches wide?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can a person with a visual disability detect all objects protruding into the path with a cane? (In order to be detected using a cane, an object must be within 27 inches of the ground. Objects hanging or mounted overhead must be higher than 80 inches to provide clear headroom)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do curbs on the pathway have curb cuts at drives, parking, and drop-offs?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RAMPS</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ACTION STEPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are the slopes of ramps no greater than 1:12? (For every 12 inches along the base of the ramp, the height increases one inch. For a 1:12 maximum slope, at least one foot of ramp length is needed for each inch of height)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do all ramps longer than 6 feet have railings on both sides?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are railings sturdy, and between 34 and 38 inches high?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the width between railings at least 36 inches?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the top and bottom of ramps and at switchbacks, is there a 5-foot-long level landing at every 30-foot horizontal length of ramp?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are ramps non-slip?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARKING &amp; DROP OFF AREAS</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ACTION STEPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are an adequate number of accessible parking spaces available (8 feet wide for car plus 5-foot striped access aisle)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are 16-foot-wide spaces, with 98 inches of vertical clearance, available for lift-equipped vans? (At least one of every 8 accessible spaces must be van-accessible)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are accessible spaces marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there signs reading “Van Accessible” at van spaces?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there an enforcement procedure to ensure that only those who need it use accessible parking?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If there are stairs at the main entrance, is there a ramp, lift, or alternative accessible entrance?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do all inaccessible entrances have signs indicating the location of an accessible entrance?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can the alternate accessible entrance be used independently?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the entrance door have at least a 32-inch clear opening (for a double door, at least one 32-inch leaf)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there at least 18 inches of clear wall space on the pull side of the door, next to the handle?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the threshold level less than 1/4 inch, or beveled, up to 1/2 inch high?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are doormats 1/2 inch high or less, and secured to the floor at all edges?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the door handle no higher than 48 inches and operable with a closed fist? (Try opening the door or operating the control using only one hand, held in a fist. If you can do it, so can a person who has limited use of his or her hands.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can doors be opened without too much force (maximum is 5 lb.)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the door has a closer, does it take at least 3 seconds to close?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the entire front desk or at least a section of the front desk at a height where customers in wheelchairs can see over the desk comfortably and have face-to-face conversation with staff?</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMERGENCY EGRESS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there sufficient lighting for egress pathways such as stairs, corridors, and exit routes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **PART 2: ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES** |
| Ideally, the layout of the building should allow people with disabilities to obtain goods or services without special assistance. Where it is not possible to provide full accessibility, assistance or alternative services should be available upon request. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>YES</strong></th>
<th><strong>NO</strong></th>
<th><strong>ACTION STEPS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HORIZONTAL CIRCULATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the accessible entrance provide direct access to the main floor, lobby, or elevator?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are all public spaces on an accessible path of travel?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the accessible route to all public spaces at least 36 inches wide?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a 5-foot circle or a T-shaped space for a person using a wheelchair to reverse direction?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| <strong>DOORS</strong> |
| Do doors in public spaces have at least a 32-inch clear opening? |
| On the pull side of doors, next to the handle, is there at least 18 inches of clear wall space so that a person using a wheelchair can get near enough to open the door? |
| Can doors be opened without too much force (5 lb. maximum)? |
| Are door handles 48 inches high or less and operable with a closed fist? |
| Are all threshold levels less than 1/4 inch, or beveled, up to 1/2 inch high? |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROOMS &amp; SPACES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are all aisles and pathways to all goods and services at least 36 inches wide?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a 5-foot circle or T-shaped space for turning a wheelchair completely?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is carpeting low-pile, tightly woven, and securely attached along edges?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In routes through public areas, are all obstacles cane-detectable (located within 27 inches of the floor or protruding less than 4 inches from the wall), or are they higher than 80 inches?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do signs designating permanent rooms and spaces, such as rest room signs, exit signs, and room numbers, comply with the appropriate requirements for accessible signage?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTROLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are all controls that are available for use by the public (including electrical, mechanical, window, cabinet, game, and self-service controls) located at an accessible height? (The maximum height for a side reach is 54 inches; for a forward reach, 48 inches. The minimum reachable height is 15 inches.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the controls operable with a closed fist?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEATS, TABLES &amp; COUNTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are the aisles between chairs or tables at least 36 inches wide?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the spaces for wheelchair seating distributed throughout?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the tops of tables or counters between 28 and 34 inches high?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are knee spaces at accessible tables at least 27 inches high, 30 inches wide, and 19 inches deep?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERTICAL CIRCULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there ramps or elevators to all levels?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On each level, if there are stairs between the entrance and/or elevator and essential public areas, is there an accessible alternate route?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### STAIRS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do treads have a non-slip surface?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do stairs have continuous rails on both sides, with extensions beyond the top and bottom stairs?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ELEVATORS & LIFTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there both visible and verbal or audible door opening/closing and floor indicators? (one tone = up, two tones = down).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the call buttons in the hallway no higher than 42 inches?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the controls outside and inside the cab have raised and Braille lettering?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a sign on the jamb at each floor identifying the floor in raised and Braille letters?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the emergency intercom usable without voice communication?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there Braille and raised-letter instructions for the communication system?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can the lift be used without assistance? If not, is a call button provided?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there at least 30 by 48 inches of clear space for a person using a wheelchair to approach to reach the controls and use the lift?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are controls between 15 and 48 inches high (up to 54 inches if a side approach is possible)?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PART 3: TELEPHONES

There are a variety of considerations in ensuring that the phone system is accessible to people with disabilities, including phones available for use by customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If pay or public use phones are provided, is there clear floor space of at least 30 by 48 inches in front of at least one?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the highest operable part of the phone no higher than 48 inches (up to 54 inches if a side approach is possible)?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the phone protrude no more than 4 inches into the circulation space?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the phone have push-button controls?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the phone hearing aid compatible?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a phone adapted with high-grade amplification for use by customers with moderate to severe hearing loss, located in a quiet area, away from ambient noise?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the phone with volume control identified with appropriate signage?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is one of the phones equipped with a telecommunications device for the deaf (TTY/TDD)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the location of the TDD identified by accessible signage bearing the International TDD Symbol?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a hands-free speakerphone with large keypad available for use by individuals who have difficulty holding a receiver and/or dialing numbers?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**PART 4: USABILITY OF RESTROOMS**

When restrooms are open to the public, they should be accessible to people with disabilities. Closing a restroom that is currently open to the public is not an allowable option.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ACTION STEPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If restrooms are available to the public, is at least one rest room (either one for each sex, or unisex) fully accessible?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there signs at inaccessible restrooms that give directions to accessible ones?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there tactile signage identifying restrooms? (Mount signs on the wall, on the latch side of the door. Avoid using ambiguous symbols in place of text to identify rest rooms).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the doorway at least 32 inches clear?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are doors equipped with accessible handles (operable with a closed fist), 48 inches high or less?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can doors be opened easily (5 lb. maximum force)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the entry configuration provide adequate maneuvering space for a</td>
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<tr>
<td>person using a wheelchair? (A person using a wheelchair needs 36 inches</td>
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<tr>
<td>of clear width for forward movement, and a 5-foot diameter clear space,</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>or a T-shaped space, to make turns. A minimum distance of 48 inches,</td>
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<tr>
<td>clear of the door swing, is needed between the two doors of an entry</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>vestibule).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a 36-inch-wide path to all fixtures?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>STALLS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the stall door operable with a closed fist, inside and out?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a wheelchair-accessible stall that has an area of at least 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>feet by 5 feet, clear of the door swing, OR is there a stall that is</td>
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<tr>
<td>less accessible but that provides greater access than a typical stall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(either 36 by 69 inches or 48 by 69 inches)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>In the accessible stall, are there grab bars behind, and on the side</td>
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<tr>
<td>wall nearest to, the toilet?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the toilet seat 17 to 19 inches high?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>LAVATORIES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does one lavatory have a 30-inch-wide by 48-inch-deep clear space in</td>
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<tr>
<td>front? (A maximum of 19 inches of the required depth may be under the</td>
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<tr>
<td>lavatory).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the lavatory rim no higher than 34 inches?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there at least 29 inches from the floor to the bottom of the</td>
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<tr>
<td>lavatory apron (excluding pipes)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can the faucet be operated with one closed fist?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are soap and other dispensers and hand dryers 48 inches high or less</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and usable with one closed fist?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the mirror mounted with the bottom edge of the reflecting surface</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>40 inches high or lower?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGNAGE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage should be designed so that it is useful for people with disabilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is all signage 60 inches above the ground?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are signs on doors on the same side as the doorknob?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is signage well lit, using uniform lighting (e.g., not spotlights), with illumination coming from behind or beside the text or sign?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is signage in clear contrasting colors (e.g., black and white)?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is signage in Braille?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from: Access for All: A Resource Manual for Meeting the Needs of One-Stop Customers with Disabilities National Service Inclusion Project located at www.SERVICEandINCLUSION.org
**DISABILITY RESOURCES: VIRGINIA**

**The Arc of Virginia (Arc)**
2147 Staples Mill Road, Richmond, VA 23230
(804) 649-8481 • www.thearcofva.org

With a state network of over 20 local chapters, the Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.

**American Council of the Blind (ACB)**
220 Wilson Boulevard #650, Arlington, VA 22201
(202) 467-5081 • www.acb.org

Strives to improve the well-being of all blind and visually impaired people by: serving as a representative national organization of blind people; elevating the social, economic and cultural levels of blind people; improving educational and rehabilitation facilities and opportunities; cooperating with the public and private institutions and organizations concerned with blind services; encouraging and assisting all blind persons to develop their abilities and conducting a public education program to promote greater understanding of blindness and the capabilities of blind people.

**National Federation of the Blind (NFBV)**
Dr. Frederic K. Schroeder, Ph.D.
www.nfbv.org

The purpose of the National Federation of the Blind is two-fold – to help blind persons achieve self-confidence and self-respect and to act as a vehicle for collective self-expression by the blind. By providing public education about blindness, information and referral services, scholarships, literature and publications about blindness, aids and appliances and other adaptive equipment for the blind, advocacy services and protection of civil rights, development and evaluation of technology, and support for blind persons and their families, members of the NFB strive to educate the public that the blind are normal individuals who can compete on terms of equality.

**Parent Resource Centers**
(877) 567-1122 • www.centerforfamilyinvolvement.org

Virginia’s Parent Resource Centers are committed to a positive relationship between parents and schools for students’ sake. PRCs assist parents with questions and planning, as well as provide resources and training sessions. About 49 of the 134 school divisions in Virginia maintain a PRC. In school divisions without PRCs, parents should contact teachers or administrators for the information and assistance they need.

**Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University (PPD)**
P.O. Box 843020, Richmond, VA 23284
(804) 828-3876 • www.partnership.vcu.edu

Virginia’s University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. Operating over 30 grant projects, the Partnership conducts a full range of activities in three broad areas that cover the age span from newborn to aging – Early Childhood/ Education, Health, and Family & Individual Involvement and Support. To achieve goals, the Partnership is committed to helping communities garner the resources needed for young children, adults and aging persons with disabilities and their families and supporters to meet needs and interests.

**Rehabilitation Research & Training Center at Virginia Commonwealth University (RRTC)**
P.O. Box 842011, Richmond, VA 23284
(804) 828-1851 • www.worksupport.com

The RRTC serves as a center of national excellence, providing resources for professionals, individuals with disabilities, and their representatives on supported employment and workplace supports.

**Virginia Advocates United Leading Together (VAULT)**
info@virginiavault.org • www.virginiavault.org

A statewide, cross-disability advocacy and education organization for individuals with disabilities.
Virginia Association of Community Services Boards (VACSB)
10128-B West Broad Street, Glen Allen, VA 23060
(804) 330-3141 • www.vacsb.org
Representing Virginia’s Community Services Boards and Behavioral Health Authorities who provide the premier mental health, intellectual disability and substance use disorder services management and delivery in Virginia’s Communities.

Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD)
Washington Building, 1100 Bank Street, 7th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 786 –0016 • www.vaboard.org
The Board serves as the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, addressing the needs of people with developmental disabilities as established under the federal “Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act” and the state “Virginians with Disabilities Act.”

Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living (VACIL)
1502B Williamson Road, NE, Roanoke, VA 24012-5100
(540) 342-1231 • www.vacil.org
There are 15 CILs in Virginia that provide services and advocacy to promote the leadership, independence, and productivity of people with disabilities. CILs work with both individuals, as well as the local communities, to remove barriers to independence and ensuring equality of persons with disabilities.

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Division of Rehabilitative Services
8004 Franklin Farms Drive, Henrico, VA 23229
(800) 552-5019 • www.dars.org
The Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) understands that skilled, dependable and productive employees are important to business success. As an agency dedicated to increasing employment opportunities to people with disabilities, DARS serves as a vital link in connecting employers with hiring needs to skilled and talented workers with disabilities who are actively seeking employment.

Virginia Department for Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS)
P.O. Box 1797, Richmond, VA 23218-1797
(804) 786-3921 • www.dbhds.virginia.gov
Available to citizens statewide, Virginia’s public mental health, intellectual disability and substance abuse services system is comprised of 16 state-operated facilities and 40 locally-run community services boards (CSBs). The CSBs and facilities serve children and adults who have—or who are at risk of—mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, intellectual disabilities, or substance abuse disorders.

Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI)
397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA 23227
(800) 622-2155 • www.vdbvi.org
Provide services and resources which empower individuals who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind to achieve their desired levels of employment, education, and personal independence.

Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDHH)
1602 Rolling Hills Drive, Richmond, VA 23239
(800) 552-7917 (V/TTY) • www.vdhh.org
Works to reduce the communication barriers between persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and those who are hearing, including family members, service providers, and the general public. Visit their website for a form to request a sign language interpreter.

Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)
101 N 14th Street, Richmond, VA 23218
(800) 292-3820 • www.doe.virginia.gov
In cooperation with local school boards, increases student learning and academic achievement.

Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA) (also known as disability Law Center of Virginia)
1910 Byrd Avenue, Suite 5, Richmond, VA 23230
(800) 552-3962 • www.vopa.org
Helps with disability-related problems like abuse, neglect, and discrimination.
DISABILITY RESOURCES: NATIONAL

The Access Board
(800) 872-2253 • www.access-board.org
Sets guidelines for accessibility standards. Provides technical assistance on accessibility requirements for transportation, architecture, and communication.

ADA Information Line
(800) 514-0301 • www.ada.gov/infoline.htm
The Department of Justice’s toll-free hotline to obtain answers to general and technical questions about the ADA and to order technical assistance materials.

American Self-Help Clearinghouse
www.selfhelpgroups.org
A national clearinghouse for self-help organizations and other resources for individuals with disabilities

AmeriCorps
(800) 833-3722 • www.americorps.gov
National website for AmeriCorps’ three main programs: AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps).

CAST
www.cast.org
A national organization that provides information, tools and training on Universal Design for Learning.

Corporation for National Service’s Equal Opportunity
(202) 606-5000, ext. 312 • eo@cns.gov • www.cns.gov
www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/eo_requirements.asp
Download the following guidelines:
• Non-Harassment Guidelines
• Acceptable Interview Questions
• A Quick Primer on Disability Law
• Accessibility Guidelines
• Non-Discrimination Guidelines
• Grant Program Civil Rights Policy
• Disability Law
• Legal Responsibilities Presentation
• Part 1203 - Non-discrimination in Federally Assisted Programs
• Part 1232 - Non-discrimination on Basis of Handicap in Programs Receiving Federal Financial Assistance

Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC)
(800) 949-4232 • www.adata.org
DBTACs are federally-funded technical assistance and training centers that provide all members of the public assistance with the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Disability.gov
www.disability.gov
Disability.gov is an award-winning federal Web site that contains disability-related resources on programs, services, laws and regulations to help people with disabilities lead full, independent lives. This site supports President Barack Obama’s administration goals outlined in the New Freedom Initiative to use information technology to deliver government services anytime, anywhere, to reduce barriers to the employment of people with disabilities.

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
(800) 526-7234 • www.askjan.org
JAN is a federally funded technical assistance center for accommodations. They offer consultation and recommendations and extensive information relating to reasonable accommodations

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities
(800) 695-0285 • www.nichcy.org
This site is an excellent “one stop” for contact information for various clearinghouses and disability organizations. It includes over 100 organizations, with addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and websites, and was developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs. The listed organization can provide a wealth of information about specific disabilities.

The National Service Inclusion Project (NSIP)
(888) 491-0326 • nsip@umb.edu
www.serviceandinclusion.org
NSIP is a project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at University of Massachusetts/Boston funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service to provide its grantees with training and technical assistance in the area of disability inclusion.

Social Security Administration (SSA)
(800) 772-1213 • www.ssa.gov
This is the federal agency responsible for administering income maintenance programs for persons with disabilities. A list of state vocational rehabilitation offices can be found on the Social Security Administration’s website.

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)
www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada
This is the federal agency charged with enforcing parts of the Americans with Disabilities Act. They provide a wealth of information on their website.
MAP: VIRGINIA WORKFORCE NETWORK

Below is a map of the Virginia Workforce Network. The Workforce Network provides support, education and training to prepare people, including those with disabilities, for jobs. The Workforce Network also provides training opportunities to Virginia businesses. For more information, visit http://vwn.vccs.edu/
ACRONYMS

AAIDD: American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
AIDD: Federal Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
ACA: Affordable Care Act
ACE: VCU Autism Center of Excellence
ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act
ADD: Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AF: Adult Foster Care
ALD: Assistive Listening Device for Hard of Hearing (Personal FM systems)
AP: Adult Protective Services
AR: Formerly the Association of Retarded Citizens (State and Local Disability Advocacy Organizations)
ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder
AT: Assistive Technology
ATLFA: Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority

BHA: Behavioral Health Authority (see CSB)
BIAV: Brain Injury Association of Virginia
CDC: Center for Disease Control
CIL: Center for Independent Living
CPS: Child Protective Services
CS: Comprehensive Services Act (for funding community-based services for youth with disabilities involved or at risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system)
CSB: Community Services Board (there are 40 BHA and CSBs in Virginia that serve as the entry point to mental health, intellectual disability, and substance abuse services)
CP: Cerebral Palsy
CBS: Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services
DBHDS: Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
DBVI: Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
DD: Developmental Disability
DJJ: Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice
DMAS: Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services
DOE: Virginia Department of Education
DSS: Virginia Department of Social Services
DSS: Office of Disability Supports & Services (on college campuses)
EI: Early Intervention (for infants and toddlers with disabilities and developmental delays)
ELL: English Language Learners
ESL: English as Second Language (ELL and ESL are used interchangeably)
ESY: Extended School Year (services for students receiving special education services)
HOME: Home and Community Based Services
HH: Hard of hearing
HOME: Housing Opportunities Made Equal
HI: Hearing Impaired
HPPD: Health Promotion for People with Disabilities
ID: Intellectual Disabilities (formerly mental retardation)
IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP: Individualized Education Program (in special education)
IFSP: Individualized Family Services Plan (in early intervention)
IP: Individual Plan for Employment
IPP: Individual Program Plan
IRWE: Impairment Relater Work Expenses
ISP: Individual Service Plan
LEA: Local Education Agency
LIHTC: Low Income Housing Tax Credit
LRE: Least Restrictive Environment (in special education)
MCHB: Maternal and Child Health Bureau
MDA: Muscular Dystrophy Association
MI: Mental Illness
MR: Mental Retardation (Now called Intellectual Disability)
NAMI: National Association on Mental Illness
NIDRR: National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research
OCS: Virginia Office of Comprehensive Services for At-Risk Youth and Families
OHI: Other Health Impairment
OSERS: Federal Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
OT: Occupational Therapy
PA: Personal Attendant
PACE: Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly
Part B: Special Education services under IDEA
Part C: Early Intervention services under IDEA
GLOSSARY

Access: Provision of a barrier-free environment, accommodations, or changes in policies, procedures, or the built environment to ensure that all individuals can benefit from, and participate in, all activities and events of a program.

Accessibility Survey: Survey of programs and policies, and the architectural, communication, and technological environment as it relates to the participation of individuals with a range of disabilities.

Accommodations: Any device, technology, service, or change in programs, policies, or the built environment that are provided to an individual with a disability to support them in their service or participation.

Alternate Formats: Different ways of providing information other than standard print documents. Some examples of alternate formats are: text files on a computer disk, large print, books on tape, Braille.

Americans with Disabilities Act 1990 (ADA): Provides civil rights protection to people with disabilities and guarantees those covered by the law equal opportunity in employment, state and local government services, transportation, places of public accommodation, and telecommunications services.

Americans with Disabilities Act Architectural Access Guidelines (ADAAG): Technical requirements under the ADA for accessibility to buildings and facilities by individuals with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. We recommend following the ADAAG requirements for Section 504 compliance.

Architectural Access: Refers to the “built” or physical environment and the ability of persons with a range of disabilities to get to, from, and around that built environment.

Assistive Listening Devices: A device that makes sound clearer and louder, and in many cases, blocks out environmental sound and interference. Most often persons with hearing loss will use assistive listening devices.

Assistive Technology Device: Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capacities of individuals with disabilities (as defined in the Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988).

Assistive Technology Service: Any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. Service includes evaluation of need; selection; purchase; coordination of related services; training and technical assistance.

Attitudinal Barriers: Attitudes, fears, and assumptions that prevent people with and without disabilities from meaningfully interacting with one another.

Augmentative Communication: Alternative means of communication used by an individual with a disability who has a severe speech or cognitive disability. An augmentative communication device may have a keyboard that the individual types on a computerized-voice output that relays the message. It might also be a sheet of paper with photos or pictures that a person would point to.

Barrier-Free Design: An approach to design that creates buildings, transportation systems, and outdoor environments that people with disabilities can access and use independently and safely (see Universal Design).

Communication Access: Ability of a program to ensure that persons with hearing loss or who are non-verbal can effectively communicate. This can include the provision of interpreters or assistive listening devices, but it can also mean speaking clearly, facing an individual, and writing notes.
Communication Barriers: Lack of communication access for persons with hearing loss, including poorly lit rooms, background noise, lack of interpreters, or captioning. Community-Based Living: Refers to individuals with disabilities living in the community with or without supports from individuals and community-based organizations.

Consumer: A term sometimes used for people with disabilities instead of “patient” or “client” to communicate their active and equal role in accessing services.

Developmentally Disabled: Defined in law as a person with a “severe and chronic disability” that is attributed to a mental or physical disability or combination; is manifested before age 22; and results in substantial functional limitation in at least three major life activities. The term is also used to refer to people who are diagnosed with mental retardation.

Direct Threat: A legal term referring to a situation when a disabling condition may pose a threat to safety of an individual or others.

Disability, Person with a: Defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as “a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.”

Disability-Related Inquiry: Any question or action likely to elicit the possible presence of a disability.

Disability Rights Movement: The collective efforts of advocates to secure equal rights, equal opportunities, and a barrier-free environment for people with disabilities.

Essential Service Functions/Duties: The fundamental duties of a service position the individual with a disability holds or desires. A function may be considered essential because the reason the position exists is to perform that function; because of the limited number of individuals among whom the performance of that job function can be distributed; and/or because the function is highly specialized and the individual was selected for his or her expertise or ability to perform the particular function. It does not include the marginal functions of the position.

Functional Limitations: Limitations to life activities that result from a disability.

Inaccessible: Any program, activity, or event that is not open to or excludes individuals with disabilities by reason of an inaccessible physical space or the lack of accommodations.

Inclusion: Active engagement of people with disabilities in all levels of society. The mere presence of people with disabilities does not necessarily constitute inclusion. A program is inclusive when people with disabilities are valued contributing members with a sense of belonging.

Inclusive Service Environment: A service program, site, or activity that actively engages individuals with disabilities as valued and equal members of a team and is open and accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Independent Living Centers (called CILs in VA): Network of community based organizations with a mission to “advance the independent living philosophy and advocate for the human rights of and services for, people with disabilities to further their full integration and participation in society.”

Independent Living Movement: Advocacy movement that views the person with a disability as an active “consumer” of services and advocates for personal independence, barrier removal, equal rights and opportunities, and consumer choice and control.

Institutional Segregation/Institutionalization: Practice of removing persons with disabilities from their communities to institutional care.

Interpreter: A certified or trained individual who facilitates communication between individuals who use sign language and individuals who do not OR for individuals for which English is not their first language.

Life Activity: Functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

Marginal Functions: Functions that can easily be reassigned or changed without altering the nature of the position.
Medicaid: Jointly funded, Federal-State health insurance program for qualified individuals. It covers approximately 36 million individuals including children, seniors, persons with disabilities, and people who are eligible to receive federally assisted income maintenance payments.

Medicare: Health insurance that covers seniors and some people with disabilities based on their work experience or the work experience of a spouse or parent. National Disability Organizations: National organizations that support, advocate for, assist, and/or serve individuals with disabilities.

Paratransit: Publicly funded transportation for persons who are unable to use mass transportation.

People First Language: Language that puts the person first when speaking of someone with a disability to remind us that they are people first. For example: “person with a disability” instead of “disabled person”; “people with disabilities” instead of “the disabled”; “she is a wheelchair user” instead of “she is wheelchair bound” or “she is in a wheelchair.”

Personal Assistance Service (PAS): Consumer-directed services that enable an individual with physical, mental, or sensory disabilities to live in his/her home and community and carry out functions of daily living, self-care, and mobility.

Physical Barriers: Physical obstacles that hinder people with physical disabilities from gaining access.

Physical or Mental Impairment: Any physiological disorder, or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more body systems, or any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.

Programmatic Access: Policies that allow for, facilitate, and embrace full participation of people with disabilities in service.

Qualified Individual with a Disability: A legal term defined under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as “an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the position that such individual holds or desires.”

Real Time Captioning: Process where a captioner types, on a device and in shorthand, words that are spoken and then the words are displayed on a computer monitor, television screen, video or overhead projector, or other type of audiovisual device for individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

Relay Service: A communications service found in all states that provides Communication Assistants who act as intermediaries on the telephone between hearing individuals and individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and/or have speech disabilities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 1973: The federal statute that ensures the rights and participation of individuals with disabilities in federally funded programs. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act: Section 508 requires that electronic and information technology of federal agencies is accessible to people with disabilities. For more information, go to www.section508.gov.

Self-Advocacy: Refers to a national movement of people with disabilities speaking and advocating for themselves. There are self-advocacy organizations throughout the United States, including VAULT in Virginia.

Self-Disclose: Action by an individual with a disability to identify their disability to another individual or individuals.

Service Description: A document that outlines the essential and marginal functions of a service position.

SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance): Benefit available to individuals who have a work history (or are the child or widow of insured), and due to disability, are no longer able to work.

SSI (Supplementary Security Income): A nationwide, federal-assistance program administered by the Social Security Administration that guarantees a minimum level of income for adults and children with a disability who have an insufficient work history.

Substantially Limits: The inability to perform a major life activity that the average person in the general population can perform; or significant restriction as to the condition, manner, or duration under which an individual can perform a particular major life activity as compared to the average person in the general population. Temporary/Transit Barriers: Barriers in the “built” or physical environment created by objects such as furniture, parked cars, planters, and other barriers that can easily be removed.

Three Part Definition of a Person with a Disability: 1) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or 2) a record of such impairment; or 3) a perception of such an impairment, even when the impairment does not exist.

Translation: The translating of written materials into different languages for those who are English Language Learners.

Transportation Barriers: Absence of accessible, reliable, and affordable transportation.

TTY/TDD: Telecommunications device for individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing or have speech disability.

Universal Design: Extends the idea of barrier-free design to cover the needs of all members of society, including children and seniors.

Voice Recognition: Assistive technology software that allows people to write and command equipment using their voice rather than their hands. This technology has been used to accommodate people with a variety of disabilities.

Work Incentives Program: Options for people who are receiving disability benefits and want to enter the work or service force while minimizing adverse effects on their SSA benefits, such as PASS plans. For more information contact the Social Security Administration (www.ssa.gov).
appendix

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
GENERAL TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

• When introduced to a person with a disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands. People with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb can usually shake hands. (Shaking hands with the left hand is an acceptable greeting.)
• If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.
• Treat adults as adults. Address people who have disabilities by their first names only when extending the same familiarity to all others.
• Relax. Don’t be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions such as “See you later,” or “Did you hear about that?” that seem to relate to a person’s disability.
• Don’t be afraid to ask questions when you’re unsure of what to do.

Communicating with Individuals who are Blind or Visually Impaired

• Speak to the individual when you approach him or her.
• State clearly who you are; speak in a normal tone of voice.
• When conversing in a group, remember to identify yourself and the person to whom you are speaking.
• Never touch or distract a service dog without first asking the owner.
• Tell the individual when you are leaving.
• Do not attempt to lead the individual without first asking; allow the person to hold your arm and control her or his own movements.
• Be descriptive when giving directions; verbally give the person information that is visually obvious to individuals who can see. For example, if you are approaching steps, mention how many steps.
• If you are offering a seat, gently place the individual’s hand on the back or arm of the chair so that the person can locate the seat.

Communicating with Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

• Gain the person’s attention before starting a conversation (i.e., tap the person gently on the shoulder or arm).
• Look directly at the individual, face the light, speak clearly, in a normal tone of voice, and keep your hands away from your face. Use short, simple sentences. Avoid smoking or chewing gum.
• If the individual uses a sign language interpreter, speak directly to the person, not the interpreter.
• If you telephone an individual who is hard of hearing, let the phone ring longer than usual.
• Speak clearly and be prepared to repeat the reason for the call and who you are.
• If you do not have a Text Telephone (TTY), dial 711 to reach the National Telecommunications Relay Service, which facilitates the call between you and an individual who uses a TTY.

Communicating with Individuals with Mobility Impairments

• If possible, put yourself at the wheelchair user’s eye level.
• Do not lean on a wheelchair or any other assistive device.
• Never patronize people who use wheelchairs by putting them on the head or shoulder.
• Do not assume the individual wants to be pushed — ask first.
• Offer assistance if the individual appears to be having difficulty opening a door.
• If you telephone the individual, allow the phone to ring longer than usual to allow extra time for the person to reach the telephone.

Communicating with Individuals with Cognitive Disabilities

• If you are in a public area with many distractions, consider moving to a quiet or private location.
• Be prepared to repeat what you say, orally or in writing.
• Offer assistance completing forms or understanding written instructions and provide extra time for decision-making. Wait for the individual to accept the offer of assistance; do not “over-assist” or be patronizing.
• Be patient, flexible and supportive. Take time to understand the individual and make sure the individual understands you.

Remember:

• Relax.
• Treat the individual with dignity, respect and courtesy.
• Listen to the individual.
• Offer assistance but do not insist or be offended if your offer is not accepted.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1. Won’t the AmeriCorps stipends affect people with disabilities who receive Social Security benefits?
In 2008, Congress passed the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax (HERT) Act that directs the Social Security Administration to ignore a living allowance earned through AmeriCorps service when determining SSI eligibility. The Act also excluded any benefit (whether case or in-kind), covering the living allowance, health insurance, child care and the educational award. It is important to note that as of 2012, the law did not yet protect services members from loss of some other benefits they may receive such as the Social Security Disability Insurance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIVING ALLOWANCE &amp; SOCIAL SECURITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AmeriCorps State/National Direct</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>SSI Recipients</td>
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<td>SSDI Recipients</td>
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QUESTION 2. What are the Responsibilities of a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) at the office?

Personal Care Attendants support people with disabilities who need help carrying out routine activities of daily living so the person can be more independent. A PCA may assist a person with tasks such as grooming, toileting, preparing meals, performing household chores, or redirecting behavior. This service is typically covered by the person’s Medicaid or other health insurance plan. Therefore, the PCA is primarily accountable to the person with the disability, responding to their preferences and directions.

While most supports provided by the PCA occur in the home or community, they may also accompany the person to work when necessary. For instance, on the job, the PCA may assist the person access the restroom, eat lunch, or travel for business purposes. Most employers lease personal care related work supports to the employee to provide through their own PCA.

QUESTION 3. What are Job Coaches? What do they do? Are they different than a PCA?

A person who helps people with disabilities find and maintain employment is often referred to as employment specialists, employment consultants, job developers, and job coaches. A job coach has two customers – the person with a disability and the employer who will hire the job seeker. A job coach must have the ability to represent the job seeker as a valuable asset to businesses while also being able to identify and facilitate the necessary supports for the person to become a successful employee. The job coach is usually paid through services the person with a disability receives from the formal disability services system, such as the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. It is not intended to be long term, although follow-along supports are typically provided when needed.

Every person with a disability is unique; every job site is different. There is no one type of workplace support that will accommodate all individuals or settings. Supports must be customized. Therefore, job coaches must be familiar with a variety of workplace supports and be ready to facilitate the right type and intensity of support to help the new hire become successful. Some examples of on the job supports might include identifying the natural cues or memory strategies to assist the person in completing tasks. Or, if the person cannot read, perhaps the business would be willing to implement a form that uses videos or small photos of tasks.

Often the success of the new hire will be related to the supports provided by other workers. A coworker might be asked if he/she could provide support or feedback to the worker with a disability during a set time period. Facilitating the support from coworkers might be necessary initially but will occur naturally over time as the coworkers get to know the new worker with a disability.

QUESTION 4. What happens after a service member leaves and we have purchased accommodations that he needed? Do they belong to our program? Can we donate them to a loaner bank?

The Virginia Office of Volunteerism & Community Service asks that each program that has received an item or device as an accommodation for a staff or service member (or volunteer) store the equipment in a safe place after the person has left the program. The OVCS maintains a list of all items purchased by AmeriCorps programs with OVCS funding for use as accommodations. The list is available for programs seeking items or devices for a staff or service member, or volunteer. If an item or device exists at a program that is no longer in use by a service member as an accommodation, it will be shipped to the program seeking a similar item or device.
appendix G

APPLICATION FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION FUNDS
A “REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION” REFERS TO A:
• Modification or adjustment to a job application process that enables a qualified applicant with a disability to be considered for the position.
• Modification or adjustment to the work environment in which a position is customarily performed that enables a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of that position.
• Modification or adjustment that enables employees with disabilities in a particular organization to enjoy the same benefits and privileges as the organization’s non-disabled employees.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>(A) BACKGROUND INFORMATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Director</td>
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Program is requesting funding as (check appropriate):
- Government Agency
- Nonprofit Organization
- Educational Institution
- Other (Please Specify)

Program receives funding as (check as appropriate):
- State Competitive
- State Formula

<table>
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<tr>
<th>(B) STATUS OF INDIVIDUAL WITH DISABILITY</th>
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| Applicant for AmeriCorps Position | Primary service environment (check appropriate):
- Office
- Home
- School
- Outdoors
- Other
| Current AmeriCorps Member |
### (C) BARRIERS RESOLUTION

1. Please describe the primary service functions to be performed by the person with a disability.
2. Has the original service description been modified to outline the essential functions? Please explain.
3. Please describe any alternative funding options you have explored.
4. What role, if any, did the individual with a disability have in identification of barriers and possible solutions and the consideration of other accommodation options?

### (D) REQUEST FOR FUNDS

1. Identify the reasonable accommodation that is needed and describe how it will enable the individual to perform essential functions.
2. What is the cost of the reasonable accommodation?
   - Please indicate the total cost of the reasonable accommodation requested over a period of a year.
     - ____ Less than $50
     - ____ $50 to $99
     - ____ $100 to $499
     - ____ $500 to $999
     - ____ $1,000 or more
3. Over what period of time will reasonable accommodations be required?
   - Please itemize costs.
   - Please provide cost verification.

### (E) COST SHARING

(Cost sharing is the participation in an endeavor by one or more funding partners)

1. Has the program considered cost sharing? If so, please describe.
2. Will more than one person benefit from the reasonable accommodation(s) to be provided? If yes, please describe.
3. What measures will be used to determine if the reasonable accommodation(s) was/were effective for the individual with a disability?

**THIS SECTION IS TO BE COMPLETED BY THE AMERICORPS*STATE DISABILITY COORDINATOR.**

- Date Application Received
- Reasonable Accommodation Funds Request Approved
- Reasonable Accommodation Funds Request Denied
- Strengths and Weaknesses of Request
- Overall Comments
- Date action taken and program notified: