

GUIDE TO CREATING INCLUSIVE VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

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Introduction

This toolkit discusses the importance, and the basics, of a service environment that promotes actions and attitudes that keep ability and acceptance in the forefront. It will provide you tools to use when speaking to, recruiting, interviewing, employing and working with people of all abilities. In addition, it will be an aid in training staff about inclusion and accommodations. Applying the principles within will be one more step toward developing an inclusive society where all are people are recognized as having value and deserving of respect for what they bring to the table.

Creating an inclusive service environment does not have to be seen as challenging, as much as it is exciting, thought-provoking, and rewarding. It is a continuous process, one that evolves and responds to changes in the environment and in policies. From kick-offs to celebrations, recruitment to retention, policy to practice, it becomes an integral part of all that you do. It impacts team-building and participant development, and is an integral part of strategic 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 already in that environment. A program manager who thinks first about a person's abilities is sure to be more inclusive and is already aware that members and volunteers with disabilities are people first. 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.

Resources are listed at the end of each section to assist you in learning more about each topic. There is also a glossary of terms and expansive resource list at the end of this document.

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What is Inclusion?



Inclusion means that *all* people, regardless of their abilities or needs, have the right to be respected and appreciated as valuable members of their communities. It also means they have the choice to participate in programs and activities in their community if they desire to do so.

Inclusive practices provide an opportunity for *all* people to:

- Participate in recreational activities in neighborhood settings.
- Serve as a member or volunteer in Senior Corps, AmeriCorps or any other volunteer program.
- Work at jobs in the community that pay a competitive wage and have careers that use their capacities to the fullest extent.
- Participate in service-learning and educational opportunities.

Inclusion applies to all parts of life

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 mandate that people with disabilities have freedom, equality, and opportunity to participate fully in public life. In addition to prohibiting discrimination, the ADA requires covered

entities to provide the accommodations, within reason, that people with disabilities need in order to have equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from goods and services offered to the general public. This may mean making reasonable modifications to policies, practices or procedures when the modifications are necessary to ensure individuals with disabilities are able to access services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations.

- People with disabilities may need support to participate fully in their communities and in national and community service programs. This support can range from providing accessibility by removing barriers in facilities to make a space accessible for a person with physical or sensory needs, to providing auxiliary aids and services when necessary to eliminate communication barriers and facilitate effective communication with individuals with disabilities, or to providing training and technical assistance to other volunteers and staff who are part of the program. Programs should respect the wants, needs, and choices of the person making the request. These supports are often just a slight modification or equal to supports given any other person in a similar setting.

Inclusion is not...

- Clustering people into one home, classroom, workplace, or social center.
- Giving “special privileges” to individuals.
- Feeling sorry for people.
- Viewing individuals as “recipients of” rather than “participants in” volunteer service.
- Stereotyping people by disability rather than looking at the person as an individual first.
- Determining what a person with a disability needs to be included without asking them first.



People who create an inclusive service environment understand 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 promotes individuals, not stereotypes. Accommodations can assist in supporting full participation in all activities.

What is a Disability?

Before we can be inclusive, we need to have an understanding of what the term “disability” means. A disability may be caused by an accident, trauma, genetics or disease, which impact upon a person's major life activities. A person may have one or more disabilities. People with disabilities may be impacted in many areas and many ways.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a comprehensive federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. The ADA defines a person with a disability as “someone with a physical or mental impairment that **substantially limits** one or more **major life activities**.” Though this definition is archaic in language, it clarifies that disability is measured by the impact it has on a person’s life.

Substantially limits, refers to having a great impact on being able to perform any one or more major life activities.

A **major life activity** is anything a person does such as walking, talking, thinking, feeling, seeing, hearing, breathing, learning, caring for oneself, performing daily living tasks, working, etc.

Some examples of life activities that may be impacted are:

- Mobility or any physical movement
- Vision
- Hearing
- Speech and language
- Emotions and /or Behavior
- Learning
- Cognition
- Personal Care
- Work



In 2008, the ADA was amended to include major bodily functions that should be considered major life activities:

"Major life activities also include the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions."

The onset of a disability can start at any time – before or at birth, during childhood, in adulthood, or in the senior years. It can be obvious or hidden. It can be progressive, recurring or unchangeable. It can be constant, relapsing or intermittent. A disability can have a mild to a profound effect on a person's life, depending on the severity of the disability and the influence of other factors. Individuals may experience more than one disability. It is important to consider the cumulative impact of multiple disabilities. In addition, not everyone who qualifies as having a disability as per the ADA definition considers himself/herself as having a disability and might be offended by being described as such.

The law also protects individuals whom the ADA definition may not describe, but who could be subjected to discrimination. For example, a person who:

- Has a record of a disability.
 - For example, someone who had epilepsy twenty years ago, but no longer experiences seizures is protected by the ADA.
- Is regarded as having a disability by others.
 - For example, someone who neither has, nor has ever had, a disability, but could be perceived as having one, (e.g. a large birthmark on the face), is protected by the ADA.
- Has an association with someone with a disability.
 - For example, a sibling of a child with HIV cannot be denied access to a daycare program based on fears that they would transmit the HIV to others is protected by the ADA.

To learn more about the ADA, visit <http://www.adagreatlakes.org/ADA/>. A local resource is the Illinois ADA Project, funded by the Great Lakes ADA Center. It was created to educate, enrich, and enlighten the people, businesses, and organizations of Illinois regarding the ADA. For more information regarding the Illinois ADA Project, visit <http://www.ada-il.org/>.

The Great Lakes ADA Center is one of 10 federally funded technical assistance centers on the ADA. Staff are available through a toll-free information line to provide informal guidance on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Accessible Information Technology (AIT). The Center's Technical Assistance Specialists can answer most questions you have immediately and will research and return your call on complex questions if necessary. They may also be able to provide you with expert referrals for a variety of disability related issues, which are not addressed by the ADA. Technical Assistance is available from the Great Lakes ADA Center Monday - Friday, from 8:00am to 5:00pm Central Time at 800-949-4232 (V/TTY) or by email at adata@adagreatlakes.org.



The U.S. Department of Justice also provides information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) through a toll-free ADA Information Line. The ADA Information Line is available to obtain answers to general and technical assistance questions: 800-514-0301 (voice) 800-514-0383 (TTY) or via their website at www.ada.gov.

The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey shows in 2009 an estimated 12.0 percent people in the United States reported a disability. That number may seem low, but in reality that is 36,230,100 people. In Illinois we have an estimated 42,500 persons aged 21 to 64 years with a disability who were not working, but were actively looking for work. More statistics can be found at <http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/reports/acs.cfm>



Let's take a moment to reflect upon the social model of disability

The social model acknowledges that some individuals have differences which can affect their ability to fully participate in society. However, the social model suggests it is society that causes an individual to be disabled when they are excluded from participation as a result of physical, programmatic, and attitudinal barriers. In the social model, disability is framed as an uneven relationship within society in which the needs of people with disabilities are frequently given little consideration.

A disability may be caused by an accident, trauma, genetics or disease, which impact a person's major life activities. People may have one or more disabilities. We have discussed how people with disabilities may be impacted in many areas and many ways. We know that no two people are alike, with or without disabilities.

Most people don't want to deliberately hurt or discriminate against anyone with a disability. The steps into a building were not constructed to keep a person using a wheelchair out. The public meeting the blind person attends, but does not offer an agenda in Braille, is not meant to discriminate. The physician or surgeon a deaf person cannot communicate with due to the lack of a communication accommodation most likely is not an intentional act of discrimination. The lack of adaptive equipment that prohibits a citizen's right to vote may not be meant to infringe upon rights, however, may be a lack of education of disability law and rights.

During the civil rights movement, these same issues were raised and considered discriminatory. Although not the intention, the impact upon human beings is the same. Even if one can justify that “my intentions are not to discriminate”: if barriers are present, the discriminatory impact remains. If we shift our thinking from “I don’t intend to create barriers,” to “I intend to remove barriers,” we will begin to see a cultural shift.

Creating Inclusive Communities

Picture a home built with specific disabilities in mind: e.g. wide doorways, ramps, clutter free, accessible storage.....a person in a scooter easily navigates independently throughout. Now, say the person wants to go shopping or out for a stroll through the neighborhood. NO curb cuts, narrow, slanting and cracked sidewalks, debris everywhere to create obstacles. This creates a different picture. And we get angry because someone in a scooter takes to the street! The disability has not changed, but the ability for that person to “fit in” no longer exists. Not because of a disability, however, but because society failed to take the needs of that person into consideration. We all need to take responsibility if we are to fix societal barriers.

Applying concepts of universal design in all aspects of what we do would accommodate and make life easier for everyone. Removing barriers would allow people with disabilities equal access to community life. Then, we can begin working on removing attitudinal barriers or stigmas attached to people with disabilities. Attitudes cannot be changed if people with disabilities are excluded from mainstream society.

As we move forward toward inclusion; ask, where is the barrier? Is there something in the environment, physical or attitudinal, that could be changed to eliminate the barrier?

Thinking about our environment in this way, and taking intentional steps to remove barriers, will promote a culture shift in regard to people with disabilities. It will help guide you as to how to support individuals in a way that will eliminate barriers to individual success and place the focus back on the person and their intrinsic abilities. The end result will be a more user friendly community for all. A community that embraces the talents,

intelligence and creativity of all people, especially those whose contributions we are missing out on through unintentional exclusion.

Remember, an inclusive service environment starts with the actions and attitudes of the individuals already in that environment.

Creating an inclusive service environment is not difficult. In this guide we have outlined steps to follow to create an inclusive experience in your program.

- Step 1: Setting the stage for inclusion
- Step 2: Orienting and training staff, volunteers, and peers
- Step 3: Ongoing evaluation

Inclusive Service Descriptions

Setting the stage for successful inclusion at your organization is key for successful recruitment. Developing inclusive service descriptions will help attract a diverse candidate pool, and ensure people with disabilities do not feel excluded from applying for a position. We can learn how to make service learning more accessible and inclusive by following examples related to employment. For example, in order to recruit valuable volunteers, you must create interesting and rewarding positions that utilize skills and interests. When writing inclusive service descriptions take into account all the elements of the service description or job duties. When defining essential functions: look at **WHAT** needs to be accomplished rather than **HOW** the functions are performed. Remember: there are many ways to accomplish the same task. Allow for individuality and creativity. Keeping these tips in mind will help you to analyze what qualifications are essential to the task.



According to guidance from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), essential functions are the basic job duties that an employee must be able to perform, with or without a reasonable accommodation. **To be considered an essential function of the position, the task must be critical to the position, without it the position would fundamentally change.**

To be considered essential the following are required:

- The position exists to perform a specific function.
- A limited number of people are available to perform the function.
- The function is specialized; the person in the position is chosen because of his/her expertise or ability.

For a function of a task to be considered marginal it is:

- Secondary to the essential functions.
- It can be done by others.
- The functions are seldom or intermittently performed.

The essential functions are the universal requirements of the position; all individuals in the position must be able to perform these tasks, with or without accommodations. Determining essential functions of the position will assist in establishing appropriate qualification standards, developing a service description, conducting interviews and selecting people. The essential functions should be determined before someone is actually in the position. The following examples are added **elements of a service description:**

- Title
- Full or Part time
- Summary of position
- Supervisory relationship
- Essential Functions - what specific task are integral in the job
- Marginal Functions – what tasks could be done by someone else
- Working Relationships
- Knowledge, skills and abilities
- Academic Qualifications
- Service Conditions
- Equipment Used
- Physical, emotional, intellectual demands

Defining the essential functions and elements of a service description provides you with the information you need to establish your qualification standards.



How do we determine: “Who is a qualified individual with a disability?” A qualified individual with a disability is one who, with or without reasonable accommodations, can perform the essential functions of the position. This is a person who meets the necessary prerequisites (see the list for elements of a service description) for the job, such as:

- Education
- Work experience
- Training
- Skills
- Licenses
- Certificates
- Other job related requirements (i.e. good judgment, ability to work well with others).

When creating inclusive service descriptions, keep in mind the setting of the job – are the conditions or location where the essential functions are performed ADA compliant and accessible to people of all abilities? If not, what barriers can be removed to bring it into compliance or could you change the setting? We will discuss this more in the Universal Design section of the toolkit.



The following resources provide basic information on employment with respect to individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

- [The ADA: Questions and answers](http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/adaqa1.html) to common questions about employment and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/adaqa1.html>

- An EEOC fact sheet discussing which employers and what employment practices are covered and employer's obligations to provide reasonable accommodation.

<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/ada17.html>

- Veterans and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): A Guide for Employers is an EEOC guide which provides information on laws and regulations that employers may find helpful if they want to make recruiting and hiring veterans with disabilities a priority. This guide describes how the ADA applies to recruiting, hiring, and accommodating veterans with disabilities, and briefly explains how protections for veterans with disabilities differ under USERRA and the ADA.
 - http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/ada_veterans_employers.cfm

- The following link to **EEOC Notice Number 915.002** may prove helpful in providing guidance on the range of disability-related questions that may be asked of prospective AmeriCorps members, including questions involving the self-identification of a disability.
<http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/preemp.html>

Inclusive Recruitment: Tips to Recruit People with Disabilities

Once you have your inclusive service descriptions available, the next step is to start recruiting. Instead of seeing recruitment of people with disabilities as an “extra step” you have to perform to be inclusive, make it part of your master plan for recruiting new members by incorporating the following strategies:

- Ensure that the recruitment process is accessible to all individuals by providing reasonable accommodations that qualified applicants will need to compete for the job (e.g., applications in alternative formats and accessible route-of-travel to the human resources office).
 - Application forms and other relevant information should be available in alternative formats for people with visual or cognitive disabilities (e.g. additional time to take a test, providing an oral versus a written examination).
 - Promote effective communication by providing auxiliary aids such as sign language interpreters, real-time captioning or assistive listening systems if needed during the application process.
 - Offer alternative formats of recruitment materials to ensure your materials can be accessed by individuals using different modalities and methods.
 - Create user-friendly, accessible websites.
 - Provide recruitment material in different formats including Braille, electronic, and large print.
- Partner with disability agencies, school districts and self-advocacy groups on Community Service Projects to establish partnerships and develop relationships.
 - Form collaborations with organizations and agencies in your community who are advocates or service providers for people with disabilities: Vocational Rehabilitation offices, Centers for



Independent Living, school districts, and self advocacy groups, to name a few, and maintain ongoing contact in order to recruit potential members and volunteers. A number of resources are available to help you recruit individuals with disabilities as potential members and volunteers:

- **Illinois Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agency**

- The goal of State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies is to assist individuals with disabilities to become employed.
- To locate the local office serving your region contact:
 - Illinois Department of Human Services
(800) 843-6154 (Voice, English or Español)
(800) 447-6404 (TTY)
www.dhs.state.il.us/

- **Illinois Network of Independent Living Centers**

- Statewide organization representing the Independent Living Centers in IL. There are 23 Centers located across Illinois providing an array of services to enable individuals with disabilities to live independently in the community. They are a good resource for recruitment of individuals with disabilities.
 - <http://www.incil.org/>

- Establish a presence at disability-related conferences and job/resource fairs to increase your visibility to potential candidates for service.
- Recruit/exhibit at Veteran's Resource Fairs.
- Do not accept or reject a candidate based solely on his/her having or not having a disability.
- Develop inclusive recruitment materials! To be sure your promotional materials are inclusive in content and language follow this example:

- **Inclusive language:** Qualified individuals with disabilities and those from diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply. We provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals and conduct all activities in fully accessible settings.
- Include people with disabilities who participate as active service members and volunteers in your brochures, videos, and other materials. Pictures of people with disabilities will portray inclusion and may help someone with a disability who is thinking of applying for a service or volunteer position feel that your organization is welcoming.
- Partner with disability agencies on community service projects to establish partnerships and develop relationships.
- Provide Disability Awareness and Inclusion Training to your staff and volunteers to further develop an Inclusive and welcoming environment. Often this can be arranged at no charge from your local Centers for Independent Living, disability agencies or the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation.

To learn more about recruitment, check out these resources:

- Office of Disability Employment Policy - Strategic Connections: Recruiting Candidates with Disabilities factsheet at <http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/connect.htm>.
- [Diverse Perspectives: People with Disabilities Fulfilling Your Business Goals](http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/diverse.htm) from the Department of Labor at <http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/diverse.htm>
- EARN - EARN supports employers in recruiting, hiring, retaining and advancing qualified individuals with disabilities <http://askearn.org/index.cfm>



Communication Basics

The ADA, other regulatory laws and the efforts of many disability organizations have made strides in improving accessibility in buildings, increasing access to education, opening employment opportunities and developing realistic portrayals of people with disabilities in television programming and motion pictures. However, progress is still needed in regard to communication and interaction. **Individuals are sometimes so concerned that they will say the wrong thing, they say nothing at all—this furthers segregation.**

When speaking about a person with a disability use what is called “Person First Language.” What this means is, first and foremost, people are individual human beings, not conditions or diseases. For example, a person is **not** an *epileptic* but rather a *person who has epilepsy*.

Remember, people first. Hence, the current standard is the use of **“People with Disabilities.”**

Use Person First Language	Instead of Negative Language
person with a disability	the disabled; handicapped
person with an intellectual, cognitive, developmental disability	retarded; mentally impaired
person who has multiple sclerosis	afflicted by MS
person with epilepsy, person with seizure disorder	epileptic
person who uses a wheelchair	confined or restricted to a wheelchair

When speaking with Veterans with disabilities, the preference for the Veteran may be to use the terminology “Disabled Vet”. When speaking with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, often times the preference is not to refer to deafness as a disability but rather to promote the perspective that the individual has a unique ability. Similarly, people with autism often do not see themselves as disabled...just different.

Keep in mind that not all people with activity limitations, as defined by the ADA, consider themselves as having a disability. A great example would be seniors who have acquired limitations as a result of how aging has impacted them. Keep the focus on abilities and how to accomplish things with or without accommodations.

Some people may have some difficulty with direct eye contact, verbal communication and/or social interactions. When communicating with a person who displays these types of discomfort, use these techniques:

- Give the individual the option to talk at an alternate time.
- Provide advance notice of meeting times and dates.
- Provide advance notice of topics to be discussed.
- If possible allow for written responses or perhaps for a friend or colleague to be present when communicating to reduce feelings of intimidation.

- Do not assume that just because the person is not looking at you they are not listening.

When communicating with people; demonstrate respect for individuality and assume ability. There is no one perfect approach for all people with or without a disability. It is often easier to forgive a sincere mistake than to forgive being ignored or avoided. The person will let you know what they need and want from you. The key to communication is to listen, being open to cues given that will help direct the conversation to mutual understanding. It is a process unique to every interaction.





Reception Etiquette Basics

This section will focus on suggestions for general good conduct. We will provide more information as it relates to specific needs later. For a start, it would be helpful to be aware of the following:

- When making an appointment for an individual, ask if any accommodations are needed. **Create a policy to do this for everyone.** In asking everyone, you eliminate the possibility of discrimination. This opens the door immediately to allow a person an opportunity to ask for whatever support they might need to be successful during the initial interaction. It is the first step in demonstrating that yours is an inclusive organization. Make sure any requested accommodation is available and satisfactory upon the individual's arrival and that nothing else is needed.
- Know where accessible restrooms, drinking fountains and telephones are located. If such facilities are not available, be ready to offer alternatives, such as a private or employee restroom, a glass of water or your desk phone.
- Use a normal tone of voice when extending a verbal welcome. Do not raise your voice unless requested.
- When introduced, be yourself and extend your usual form of greeting. Be sensitive to reactions and adjust your behavior based upon the individual's response.
- Make eye contact letting the person know you see him/her. Welcome the person through your body language and facial expression. Keep in mind that for some individuals, eye contact may be difficult. Be sensitive to this as well. You can pay attention to the person without maintaining continual eye contact.
- When talking, speak directly to that person rather than to or through a companion or interpreter who may be along.

- When assisting someone, respect confidentiality – utilize a private space for personal questions, e.g. medical intake forms for a person who requires assistance in reading them or filling them out.
- Call a person by his or her first name only when extending that familiarity to all others present. Ask the person how he/she wishes to be addressed.
- Never patronize a person who uses a wheelchair by patting him/her on the head or shoulder.
- When addressing a person who uses a wheelchair, never lean on the person's wheelchair. The chair is part of the space that belongs to the person who uses it. Stand back a few feet, so the person does not have to look up to speak to you.
- If you think an individual requires assistance, offer it in a dignified manner with sensitivity and respect. Be prepared to have the offer declined. Do not proceed to assist if your offer is declined. If the offer is accepted, listen to and accept instructions.
- If a person is blind and requests guidance to find their way to a different area of the facility, you can offer verbal directions, or if the person prefers you can travel with them as a guide. If you are going to guide a person, offer your arm (at or about the elbow) and allow the individual to grasp it. This enables you to guide rather than propel or lead the person. Do not rush forward; walk at the rate of the person you are leading. Describe/explain the path you are taking. **Example:** We will step up in about three feet. Here is the step or your chair is on your right. If needed place the person's hand on the chair to locate it.
- Offer to hold or carry packages; take a coat or umbrella in a welcoming manner. Example: "May I help you with your package?" Do not offer to hand a cane or crutches or other assistive devices unless requested by the individual. This allows each individual to perform at his/her peak, rather than assuming that help is needed.

Conversation Etiquette

Now that you are aware of some basic communication and reception rules, let us move on to the next step: sustained conversation.

- If a companion is present, remember to maintain attention toward and speak to the person, not the companion. Remember, eye contact is not staring. Be sensitive to the person.
- Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use accepted common expressions such as "See you later" or "Got to be running along" that seem to relate to the person's disability.
- When speaking with someone who is **deaf or hard of hearing**, look directly at the person, being sure you have eye contact and speak clearly, naturally and slowly. Approximately 25-35% of words in English can be recognized through lip reading, leaving about 65 -75% of words that will go unrecognized. Not all people who are deaf lip-read. Those who do will rely on facial expression and other body language to help in understanding. Remember not to shout; shouting distorts sounds accepted through hearing aids and cochlear implants which inhibits lip reading. Show consideration by facing the light source and keeping your hands away from your mouth when speaking. Refrain from having gum, food, candy, toothpicks and the like in your mouth while speaking. Keep you facial expression and body language in tune with the content of the conversation. Be prepared to offer a visual cue. Written notes may help but ask first if that is preferred. Be aware that deaf people are very expressive. Do not make assumptions about their attitude and/or personality based on their facial expressions. Facial expressions are a part of sign language and cannot be judged separately. Deaf people tend to be more aware of the timey changes in facial expressions in others and will recognize if those changes do not mesh with the content of the interviewer. If a deaf person is more direct than what is socially accepted by hearing people, do not take it personally. It is part of deaf culture.
- When speaking to someone who is using a sign language interpreter direct your conversation to the individual, not the sign language interpreter.

- When talking for more than a few minutes with a person who is using a wheelchair, sit down and position yourself at eye level to facilitate conversation, Do not be in a position that will require the person to turn or tilt his/her head to keep you in their range of vision.
- When greeting a person who is blind, identify yourself and others who may be with you. When conversing in a group, introduce each person indicating their location in reference to the person who is blind. Speak in a normal tone of voice. When moving from one location to another, offer your arm for assistance if requested. You can ask if the person wants a verbal description of the environment when walking. Verbally excuse yourself when leaving the person.
- If you are walking with a person who uses a service animal, walk on the opposite side of the animal. If the person is blind or has low vision, you can ask if he/she would like you to describe the environment as you walk.
- Listen attentively when you're talking to a person who has a **speech disability**. Keep your manner encouraging rather than correcting. Exercise patience rather than attempting to speak for the person. If necessary, ask short questions to which a short answer, nod or a shake of the head will suffice. Never pretend to understand if you don't. It is okay to repeat what you think you understand, or to incorporate statements into each of your following questions to be sure you understood correctly. The person's reactions will clue you in and guide you to understanding. Be willing to repeat or rephrase a question.
- Open-ended questions are often more appropriate than closed-ended questions. For example:
Closed-Ended Question: "You were a tax accountant in XYZ Company in the corporate planning department for seven years. What did you do there?"
Open-Ended Question: "Tell me about your recent position as a tax accountant."



Interview Scheduling Etiquette

After successfully recruiting people with disabilities, you may need more information on communication and interviewing etiquette. The initial steps of interview scheduling can make a difference in the success of the applicant.

Some deaf people may be calling you through relay, which could be through a videophone or a TTY. Always speak to the deaf person directly. Do not tell the relay operator, “Tell her...”.

Some interviewees will phone in prior to the appointment date, specifically for travel information. The scheduler should be very familiar with the travel path in order to provide interviewees with detailed information. Be aware of any accessible transit that is available in your area and share that information. Attention should be given to ensure that the location where the interview is to be held is accessible even if you do not know whether or not the applicant requires accessibility. Best practice is to be proactive and not require an applicant to identify that they have a mobility disability in advance of an interview. This may require relocating the interview to

another location. The following accessible features should be available (if applicable):

- A minimum of 1 designated accessible parking space located near the facility entrance.
- An accessible entrance to the facility with signage indicating where the accessible entrance is located if not all entrances are accessible.
- At least one accessible restroom located near the interview location.
- An elevator or ramp if the site of the interview is not on the ground floor.

If an interview site is inaccessible (e.g., steps without a ramp or a building without an elevator), inform the person about the barrier prior to the interview and offer to make arrangements for an alternative interview site. If you want to figure out how you could remove the barrier, or need ideas for an alternative arrangement, you can call your regional ADA Center at (800) 949-4232 to discuss the situation.

When scheduling an interview consider the applicant's needs ahead of time:

- Be sure to ask **every** individual if accommodations are needed. The type of auxiliary aid or service necessary to ensure effective communication will vary in accordance with the method of communication used by the individual; the nature, length, and complexity of the communication involved; and the context in which the communication is taking place. Determine who is responsible for what prior to the interview. For example, if an interpreter is needed, who will be fiscally responsible and who will arrange for the interpreter. Usually it is the employer or volunteer program. Sometimes individuals will bring their own equipment/assistant for support. If you are unsure about an accommodation, call your regional ADA Center at (800) 949-4232 (v/tty) for assistance.
- Inform applicants if they will be required to take a test to demonstrate skills to perform actual or simulated tasks. This provides them the opportunity to request reasonable accommodations if necessary to be successful in this process.

- When giving directions to a person who uses a wheelchair, consider distance, weather conditions, and physical obstacles such as stairs, curbs and steep hills.
- Provide specific descriptions, such as "left a hundred feet" or "the chair is directly to your right" when directing a person who is blind or has low vision.
- If a sign language interpreter is needed, provide a copy of the interview questions in advance. The interpreter will let you know how soon he/she needs them. When a deaf person is requesting a sign language interpreter, ask them if they need one who uses American Sign Language (ASL), Signing Exact English (SEE) or Pidgin Signed English (PSE), which is something in between the two. All deaf people have their own preference. ASL and SEE are completely different and are not mutually understood by the users. Try to reserve an interpreter with as much advance notice as possible.
- When scheduling an interview, be aware that the person may be required to make a reservation with a public transit system up to 48 hours in advance and this may necessitate your adjusting the date/time of the interview. Provide the interviewee with an estimated time to schedule the return trip when arranging the interview appointment.
- Let all interviewees know in advance the names of people he or she will be meeting. This courtesy allows the person to be aware of who will be participating in the interview. It also allows the interviewee to respond if the number of people in the room will create a situation that might be overwhelming.

Expect the same measure of punctuality and performance from all potential or actual employees, short of accommodation. People with disabilities expect **equal** treatment, not special treatment.

Interviewing Technique Etiquette

- Conduct interviews in a manner that emphasizes abilities, achievements and individual qualities.
- When choosing your interview space, consider the overall environment:
 - Is it accessible?
 - Does it have adequate lighting? For example, a person with fibromyalgia might experience pain from florescent lighting.
 - Consider lighting when determining where you sit. For example, when interfacing with a person who is deaf, face the light source. Consider space and height of equipment if equipment is to be used.
 - Consider noise level and amount of distraction in the physical environment.
- If services from a captionist or sign language interpreter will be utilized during an interview, provide the service provider with the interview questions in advance to allow for preparation time. During the interview, remember to look at the person being interviewed, not the service provider.
- Conduct your interview as you would with anyone.
- Allow adequate time for a response. Do not complete a sentence for any interviewee.
- If verbal interaction is difficult for the person, and it works for the interviewer, provide the opportunity for written responses. This can be done in many ways: Submission of written response; allowing the interviewee to read prepared, written answers during the interview; or allowing the person to write responses during the interview are alternatives to the traditional verbal interview method.
- If the person has indicated discomfort with the number of people involved in the interview, explore options: tape the interview with

permission; provide written responses to other interviewers; reduce the number of people involved in the interview; provide interview questions prior to the interview, if appropriate; sit in a circle during the interview, rather than isolating the interviewee.

- Do not speculate or make judgments regarding how a person's disability might impact job performance. If you believe an applicant with an obvious disability will need a reasonable accommodation to do the job, you may ask the applicant to describe or demonstrate how he/she would perform the job.

Examples:

Inappropriate: "I notice that you are in a wheelchair, and I wonder how you get around. Tell me about your disability."

Appropriate: "This position requires using a saw, as you can see from the job description. Can you describe how you would perform these duties, with or without accommodations?" This statement again opens the door for communication about accommodations.

Interview Questions that are NOT OK to ask:

- Do you have a disability?
- Do you have any physical or mental impairment which might limit you in performing this job?
- Have you ever collected worker's compensation?
- What medical conditions do you have?
- What information can you tell me about your disability?
- What happened to you?

Interview Questions that are OK to ask:

- Are you able to perform the essential functions of this position with or without reasonable accommodations?
- Can you describe how you would perform the following job functions with or without reasonable accommodations (followed by a list of duties)?
- How would you.....?
- What would you do if....?
- How long would it take to.....? **Be sure you ask every candidate the SAME questions; this is a key to avoiding discrimination.**

Interviewing Courtesies for Effective Communication

The following information will give you a few examples as to how to accommodate individuals during the interview process. Keep in mind that universally, most people would prefer a quiet, open, comfortable, well lit, clutter free environment for an interview.

Courtesies for Specific Types of Disabilities

Interviewing a person who uses a mobility device:

- Enable people who use crutches, canes or wheelchairs to keep them within reach.
- Be sure that the interview space is adequate to accommodate a wheelchair or other device.
- If needed, be sure that access to a work surface will accommodate a wheelchair and/or provide adequate space for utilization.
- When walking with someone who uses a mobility aid, walk at his/her pace.
- Do not touch, pull, push or otherwise physically interact with an individual's body or equipment, unless you are asked to do so.
- Be aware that some people who use wheelchairs may prefer to transfer into an office chair for the duration of the interview. Offer a chair to them, and ask "With or without arms?"
- Again, when speaking to a person who uses a wheelchair or crutches for more than a few minutes, sit in a chair. Place yourself at that person's eye level to facilitate conversation.

Interviewing a person who is blind or has low vision:

- When greeting the person, always identify yourself and introduce anyone else who might be present.
- If the person does not reach out hand to shake hands, verbally extend a welcome. **EXAMPLE:** *Welcome to the City of Chicago!*

- If the person requires a sighted guide for mobility, offer your arm at or above the elbow, walk at the person's pace and give verbal description of your path.
- When offering seating, give a verbal description followed by a cue as to where the seat is located and, if required, place the person's hand on the back or arm of the seat.
- If you need to leave a person who is blind, let him/her know. Be sure the person has a point of reference like a wall, table or some other landmark before leaving.
- Use a normal tone of voice during the interview.
- If the person has a service animal, do not interact with the animal.
- Provide all information in an alternative format as requested by the individual. Oftentimes, the individual will have a screen reader and will be able to access information provided on line or via email, as long as it is accessible. If you are planning on giving new information during the interview, be sure you plan in advance according to the person's needs.
- Do not move items after the person has placed them. The person will retrieve them as needed.
- If you serve food, let the person know the location of what type of food is on the plate according to clock orientation: twelve o'clock is furthest from them, six o'clock is nearest.
- Good lighting which is not too bright as to cause glare is important. Verdana or Ariel print of a size 12 or 14 font, black print on white paper is a good rule of thumb for written information.

Interviewing a person with a speech disability:

- Give your whole attention when talking.
- If necessary, ask short questions that require short answers or a nod of the head.
- Do not pretend to understand if you do not. Try rephrasing what you say, or ask the person to repeat what you do not understand.

- Do not raise your voice. Most people with a speech disability can hear and understand.
- Remember that articulation is not a direct reflection of cognition.
- Don't interrupt or attempt to complete the person's sentence.
- Ask the person to write it down or suggest another means of facilitating conversation.
- A quiet environment makes communication easier.

Interviewing a person who is deaf or hard of hearing:

- To attract the attention of a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, it is okay to touch him or her lightly on the shoulder if needed. Sometimes just crossing his/her line of vision is adequate.

Ask them where they would like to sit (most deaf people prefer to face the door, so they are more aware of their environment – someone passing by or opening the door).

- Turn off cell phones and hold all calls.
- Be aware that dangling bracelets/ear rings or a loudly ticking clock may be a distraction and interfere with hearing.
- Be aware that Deaf culture exists. The uppercase D (Deaf) can be used to indicate a reference to a specific, self-defined cultural group in the United States. Some people who are Deaf do not view deafness as a disability. Be sensitive to this. The terminology here is not the focus.
- **If the interviewee lip-reads**, look directly at him or her. Speak clearly at a normal pace. Do not exaggerate your lip movements or shout. Speak expressively because the person will rely on your facial expressions, gestures, body language and eye contact. **(Note: It is estimated that only three of four out of ten spoken words are visible on the lips.)**
- Place yourself facing the light source and keep your hands away from your mouth when speaking. Do not chew gum. Shouting does not help and can be detrimental. Only raise your voice upon request. Brief, concise written notes may be helpful, but ask first if this is okay.

- In the United States most people who are deaf use American Sign Language (ASL.) ASL is not a universal language. ASL is a language with its own syntax and grammatical structure. When scheduling an interpreter for a non-English speaking person, be certain to retain an interpreter that speaks and interprets in the language of the person.
- If a communication provider (e.g. a sign language interpreter) is present, it is commonplace for the provider to be seated beside the interviewer, across from the interviewee. Look at the interviewee, not the provider as they speak.
- Communication providers **facilitate** communication. They should not be consulted or regarded as a reference for the interview.
- Follow the person's cues to find out what type of communication they prefer: gesture/ASL/writing/speaking. If you have trouble understanding, let them know.
- If you need to leave a person who is deaf, let him/her know and if possible, the reason why. This is in tune with deaf culture, where sounds are not easily identified and constant "keeping each other apprised of whereabouts" is common.

Interviewing a person who has Autism

- Social situations can often cause stress for persons with autism. They often have difficulty interpreting the body language of others. It is helpful to eliminate triggers and/or causes of the stress. These could include: noise, crowds, being misunderstood, lack of structure, change, confusion, lack of organization, lack of defined rules.

Strategies you might use to ease stress could include allowing the person with autism to wear earphones or earplugs using an alternative means of communication – writing questions or answers; holding the interview in a quiet, organized setting without interruptions.

- Providing questions before the interview may be helpful. Allow plenty of time to process the information.
- Be clear and direct in your statements
- Do not try to make small talk.

- Putting questions in writing, color coding, using charts and diagrams are strategies which may be helpful.

Interviewing a person who has a psychiatric disability:

- Remember that some psychiatric disabilities are cyclical in nature. Don't stereotype a person by assuming an experience you have had in the past will recur; it may, or may not. Also, disabilities are manifested in a diverse ways in different people.
- If an advocate attends the interview as a support to the interviewee, have the support person sitting on the same side of the table as the interviewee during the interview.
- Remember to advise the interviewee of the number and names of people who will be participating in the interview process; be receptive of taking an alternative plan if the person indicates this might be more than they can handle.
- Provide interview questions ahead of time to reduce stress.
- Consider alternate means of answering questions – noted previously.

Interviewing a person with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder):

- Host the interview in a setting that offers as much natural lighting as possible.
- Decrease clutter in the interview environment.
- Decrease noise in the environment. For example the noise of a clock ticking, a phone ringing, or jingling jewelry may cause distress during the interview.
- Utilizing a quiet space, plan for **no** interruptions.
- Provide written interview questions and an alternate means of responding to them.
- Offer and allow for a break if the interviewee requests one.

Interviewing a person with a TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury):

- Allow time for processing questions.
- Be concise in questions.
- Break complex questions into a series of smaller ones.

Remember PTSD and TBI are acquired disabilities resulting from external trauma on an emotional and/or physical plane. The individual may just need time to figure out what his or her mind and body can do again.

Interviewing Resources:

Focus on Ability: Interviewing Applicants with Disabilities

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/focus.htm>

Employer Tips on Interviewing Applicants with Disabilities

http://www.onestops.info/article.php?article_id=2



Reasonable Accommodations

After you have successfully interviewed someone with a disability, you will need to be prepared to further discuss accommodations if accommodations are requested. If you have followed the preceding guidelines, you have already provided several opportunities to discuss accommodations and may have provided them already for certain circumstances.

An accommodation is any change in the service environment or in the way things are customarily done that allows an individual with a disability to enjoy equal service opportunities. Reasonable accommodations enhance the opportunity for qualified people, who may not otherwise be considered for reasons unrelated to actual service requirements, to be or remain employed. The purpose of providing reasonable accommodations is to enable organizations to hire and/or retain qualified candidates regardless of their disability by eliminating barriers in the work place. Making reasonable accommodations is a form of non-discrimination.

Under the Title I of the ADA, reasonable accommodation is required in three areas: application process, essential functions of a job, benefits and privileges. Common requests for reasonable accommodations from service program members may include:

1. Modification to the **application process**: for example, providing alternative formats of a service application, such as large print or electronic versions, to ensure an applicant with a disability can apply for the service position if they wish to do so.
2. A **modification or adjustment to the service environment**: for example, a raised table to allow wheelchair access to a computer or additional lighting to accommodate someone who has low vision.
3. **Modifications may need to be made to provide** equal access to lunchrooms, employee lounges, restrooms, meeting rooms, and other AmeriCorps-sponsored services such as health programs, transportation, and social events. When setting up service projects, it is important to make sure the site is accessible.

Types of accommodations include the following:

- Flexible scheduling
- Restructuring job positions to be part time
- Daily work task list
- Use of headphones/background music/ear plugs
- Breaking tasks into small steps
- Minimizing distractions in the work place
- Reassignment of a person or job duties
- Modifications to how a task is done
- Color coding work tasks/sequences
- Allowing a service animal in the workplace
- Providing a mentor
- Working from home
- Change in the service site
- Adjustments to lighting: less direct, softer, no buzzing
- Providing specialized equipment (i.e. specialized software, etc.)
- **Examples of assistive devices** often used in the work place:
Teletypewriter (TTY) or telephone amplifier
Wooden blocks to elevate desks and tables

Large-type computer terminals or screen reader
(example: JAWS)

Decisions to implement an accommodation should include making a choice that will best meet the needs of the individual by minimizing limitations and enhancing his/her ability to perform job tasks while serving universal interests.

Most accommodations are no or low tech and cost under \$500. Many cost nothing, for example: breaking jobs into smaller tasks, flexible schedules, removal of clutter from the work area.

Minimal cost accommodations include: post it notes, a lever door handle, tools, pens, scissors attached to cords for easy retrieval.

Hi-tech accommodations include: text to speech software or an automatic door opener.

Use these resources to learn more about accommodations:

- Reasonable Accommodation Under the ADA
http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/hr_tips/article_1.cfm?b_id=20
- Accommodations of Specific Disabilities
http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/hr_tips/article.cfm?group_id=4
- Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employer's Practical Guide to Reasonable Accommodation Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
<http://askjan.org/Erguide/>
- Information on Job Accommodation network (JAN) <http://askjan.org>
- Information on disability products and services:
<http://disabilityinfo.gov/>
- Information on assistive technology and rehabilitation equipment
<http://www.abledata.com/>



Service Animals

Service animals are animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities. Over 12,000 people use the aid of service animals. The most familiar service animals are guide dogs, used by people with visual disabilities. However, service animals are assisting people who have other disabilities as well. All people who use a service animal may, or may not, have an apparent disability.

What is a Service Animal? A service animal is not a pet.

Effective March 15, 2011, the ADA defines service animal to mean any **dog** that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other disability. The rule provides an exception to the “dog” rule that permits the use of trained miniature horses as alternatives to dogs, subject to certain limitations including nature of the setting, size, etc. More information on the miniature horse exception can be found on the DOJ ADA website at www.ada.gov.

Some examples of service animal tasks:

- Alerting people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Pushing wheelchairs or carrying and picking up things for people with physical disabilities.
- Assisting people with a physical disability with balance.

Service Animal Access

People with disabilities have the right to be accompanied by their service animal **at all times. Individuals with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animals in all areas of public facilities and private businesses where members of the public, program**

participants, clients, customers, patrons, or invitees are allowed to go. This right is protected by the following Federal laws:

- Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA (1990)
 - More information available at:
http://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm
- Air Carrier Access Act (1986)
 - More information available at:
<http://airconsumer.ost.dot.gov/publications/disabled.htm>
- Fair Housing Amendments Act (1988)
 - More information available at:
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/disabilities/pwd.cfm>
- Rehabilitation Act (1973)

Service Animal Etiquette

- Do not touch the service animal, or the person it assists, without permission.
- Do not make noises at the service animal; it may distract the animal from doing its job.
- Do not feed the service animal; it may disrupt his/her schedule.
- Do not ask for documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained or licensed as a service animal.
- Do not ask about the nature or extent of an individual's disability.
- Do not be offended if the person does not discuss his/her disability or the assistance the service animal provides.

Use this fact sheet to review the newly revised ADA definition of a service

animal and learn about new regulations which protect the rights of individuals who use service animals.

http://www.adagreatlakes.org/Publications/Factsheets/National_ADA_Center_Fact_Sheet_5_SERVICE_ANIMALS.pdf

Commonly asked questions about service animals in places of business can be found at <http://www.ada.gov/gasrvc.htm>. A legal brief about service Animals under the ADA prepared by Equip for Equality can be accessed at www.equipforequality.org/resourcecenter/ada_serviceanimals.pdf.

Universal Design/Accessibility

Creating an inclusive service environment involves creating inclusive service descriptions and utilizing universal design. It means pro-actively seeking to include people with disabilities at all levels of planning and delivery, ensuring that everyone can make a valued contribution and weaving access and accommodation into all aspects of the program. As we talk about accommodations, we must talk about Universal Design. Universal Design is “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.” (Ron Mace)

Universal Design creates environments to be usable by everyone, regardless of their abilities or needs. It is equitable in that the design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities. It is flexible in that a wide range of individual preferences and abilities are provided choice in methods of use. It is simple and intuitive in that the arrangement of information is consistent with importance.

Some examples of Universal Design:

- **Curb cuts:** used by people using wheelchairs, parents pushing strollers, bicycles, travelers with rolling luggage.
- **Closed-captioned television:** initially developed for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, but now found in gyms, sports bars, and an option for television and movies at home.
- **Wider doorways** initially for people who use wheelchairs but also for

people of large stature, parents who have a child in hand, people with guide dogs, everyone. They offer wider interior circulation and more spaciousness.

- **Lever door handles** instead of door knobs: used by people who find it difficult to grasp/grip objects, mothers holding their child, people carrying objects.
- **Light switches and electrical receptacles located at a height that is reachable** by those who may have trouble bending over or reaching up, more accessible to children and people of short stature.
- **Movement or sound activated switches offer ease for all.** Useful if your hands are full, if you have difficulty locating or manipulating a switch, and if you have difficulty with mobility to get to a switch.
- **Materials provided in large print** with black ink on white or light yellow paper are simply easier for everyone to read.

Information on Universal Design (UD) use
<http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/index.htm>

Universal design allows for the greatest accessibility by the greatest number of people. **Accessibility** refers to all the features that make an environment available to a person. When thinking about the environment of your program, ask yourself -

Do a wide range of persons with disabilities have an opportunity to take advantage of your program in these five areas?

- **Architecture/Space**
- **Programs**
- **Communication**
- **Alternative Formats**
- **Technology**

If you have questions as to whether or not your site is accessible you may contact your nearest Center for Independent Living, the Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities in Illinois or read the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design found at

<http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADASTandards/2010ADASTandards.htm>

Architectural access means sites, facilities, and buildings need to be barrier free. Some components which help to create a barrier free environment include:

- Parking spaces located close to the work site entrance.
- The pathway from parking to the entrance should not have steps or level changes.
- For a building with stairs at the entrance, appropriately graded ramps with handrails for entering the building are provided.
- Elevators are available in buildings with multiple levels.
- Signs to indicate location of accessible entrance, parking, and bathrooms, water fountains (signage should include use of symbols and graphics).
- Fire alarms with strobe lights, vibration – or an alternate notification plan.
- Corridors, doors, conference rooms, and common areas wide enough for wheelchair access (36" wide).

In addition to the ADA it is important to understand that any recipient of federal funds must comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, including service sites. The provisions of Section 504 mirror those of the ADA. All programs must be in accessible locations.

There are revised ADA regulations (implemented 3/15/11) that require further accessibility requirements be met. Buildings built or altered with the 1991 ADA Standards for Accessible Design are protected until future alterations are made. There is a fact sheet with information on the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design if you would like to learn more.

Compliance with the 2010 Standards is required for new construction and alterations of building and facilities.

http://www.adagreatlakes.org/Publications/Factsheets/National_ADA_Center_Fact_Sheet_9_OVERVIEW_OF_2010_STANDARDS_OF_DESIGN.pdf

The Department of Justice has also compiled guidance on the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design. This explanatory information from the regulations addresses the scoping and technical provisions of the 2010 Standards. Learn more at

<http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADASTandards/2010ADASTandards.htm>

<http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADASTandards/Guidance2010ADASTandards.htm>.

A checklist for existing facilities under the ADA can be found on-line at:
<http://www.adachecklist.org/>

It is also important to understand that the State of Illinois has its own accessibility code (Illinois Accessibility Code) which in some situations may be more stringent than the ADA. Some examples where it is more stringent include:

- **Size of Parking Spaces (all spaces are 16 feet wide and cannot share an access aisle)**
- **Opening force of external and internal doors (8.5 lbs external doors and 5 lbs internal doors)**

More information about the Illinois Accessibility Code can be found at: <http://www.cdb.state.il.us/IAC.shtml> A checklist for the Illinois Accessibility Code can be found at:

<http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/access0203.pdf>

Programmatic access means that the site provides meaningful and equal access to all services, programs, and activities. For example:

- Interviews are conducted in an accessible building.
- Training is provided in an accessible location.
- Alternative formats of program materials can be provided.
- Up-front seating is offered to people with visual or hearing disabilities.
- Quality lighting is provided— no strobes (other than the strobe light mentioned above as a warning for fire), flashing lights, spot-lights.

- Pro-active and organized approaches to program accessibility are in place.
- Evaluate the ongoing effectiveness of program.

Accessible communication means that people with hearing, speech, vision, cognitive and learning disabilities can access all the information you offer. Some examples of how to make communication accessible are as follows:

- Sign language interpreter or Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART) provider for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Quiet space for meetings and trainings for members/volunteers who are deaf or hard of hearing or need a quiet space.
- Different or simplified forms for persons with cognitive or learning disabilities.
- Voice Activated Software.



Alternative format means that materials are provided in formats accessible to people with visual or cognitive disabilities including Braille, electronic, large print, and illustrated materials. Some other examples:

- Read overheads, flipcharts and/or power points when presenting.
- Use photographs and Braille names on office doors and mailboxes. The ADA requires Braille to identify all doors.

- Mail materials electronically prior to events.
- Use written or verbal descriptions of charts, graphs.
- Use Arial or Verdana font, size 12 or 14.
- Use black on white, flat paper with upper and lower case letters.
- Use universal symbols when possible and appropriate.

Accessible technology includes computer hardware and software, websites, multimedia presentations, telecommunications products such as telephones, information kiosks and transaction machines, office equipment such as copiers and fax machines, and any other technology that facilitates the creation, conversion, or duplication of data or information. For example for websites, we know that:

- An accessible website allows people with disabilities to experience, navigate, and interact with the website.
- An example of universally designed website: “text-only” options provide a faster downloading alternative for all users.
- Pages are simple and consistent throughout the website.
- If using images, keep them to a minimum.
- HTML is used as the default information format.
- Text color contrasts with page background.
- Only use clear and commonly used fonts, e.g. Arial or Verdana at 12 or 14.

Accessible Technology Resources

Accessible Technology for All FAQ's

http://www.accessibletech.org/access_articles/general/ITbarriers.php.

Employment and the ADA: Questions & Answers

<http://www.accessibletech.org/faq/employ.php>

In conclusion, **what creates a welcoming service program?**

- Individuals with disabilities are full participants in program and service activities and are treated as peers.
- Expectations for individuals with disabilities are the same as for others.
- Welcoming statements, such as “Qualified individuals with disabilities and those from diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply. We provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals and conduct all activities in fully accessible settings.”
- Products and interior decorations used, portray images of people with disabilities.
- An accommodation process is in place, is made available to, and is explained to everyone.
- Individuals are regarded in terms of their abilities and all abilities have value.

If you have questions as to whether or not your program is accessible you may contact the Great Lakes ADA Center for technical assistance 800-949-4232 (V/TTY).

Now, you are ready to pursue your goal of inclusion. Realize that inclusion is an ongoing process: one of continued evaluating of effectiveness and actively redefining. What works today, may not work tomorrow. What works for one individual, may not work for another. Once the concept of inclusion is instilled, the process becomes easier; the process extended to all by all, resulting in a welcoming and healthy environment.

The Illinois Inclusion Team hopes that this toolkit offers you useful tools for active pursuit of inclusion strategies within your program.

Glossary and Disability Related Terms

Alternative Formats: A version of a document that has been converted to ensure that people with disabilities are provided with equal access to information. Examples: text files on a flash drive or CD-ROM, large print or in Braille, books on tape.

Auxiliary aids: Auxiliary aids for individuals who are blind or visually impaired: Methods of making visually delivered materials available include qualified readers; taped texts; audio recordings; Brailled materials and displays; screen reader software; magnification software; optical readers; secondary auditory programs (SAP); large print materials; accessible electronic and information technology; or other effective to individuals who are blind or have low vision.

Auxiliary aids for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing: Methods of making aurally delivered information available can be done through use of qualified interpreters on-site or through video remote interpreting (VRI) services; notetakers; real-time computer-aided transcription services; written materials; exchange of written notes; telephone handset amplifiers; assistive listening devices; assistive listening systems; telephones compatible with hearing aids; closed caption decoders; open and closed captioning, including real-time captioning; voice, text, and video-based telecommunications products and systems, including text telephones (TTYs), videophones, and captioned telephones, or equally effective telecommunications devices; videotext displays; accessible electronic and information technology; or other effective methods of making aurally delivered information available to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

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

Barriers: Obstacles that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society. **Physical barriers** hinder people with physical

disabilities from gaining access. **Attitudinal barriers** are fears and assumptions that prevent people with and without disabilities from meaningfully interacting with one another.

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

Centers for Independent Living (CILS): Community based, consumer controlled, not-for-profit centers governed by a board of directors of whom at least 51% are people with disabilities. Also, a minimum of 51% of Center employees are people with disabilities. Services provided include: peer support, information and referral, independent living skills training, and advocacy.

Disability, Person with a: Legally defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 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 Organizations: Organizations of and/or who advocate or otherwise provide services, for people with disabilities and/or organizations that discuss and act as disability advocates.

Essential Functions/Duties: communicates the specific requirements of the participant in national service over the course of a service year. This information is essential for effectively determining the qualifications of an applicant as well as the reasonable accommodations that may be required.

Marginal Functions are tasks that are not essential to the position. These may be adjusted or reassigned.

Hidden Disability: Most disabilities are not visible. Some examples of hidden disabilities include psychiatric disabilities, cognitive disabilities, some hearing and vision disabilities, alcoholism and addiction, epilepsy, diabetes.

Inclusion: The active engagement of people with disabilities in all aspects of society. The presence of people with disabilities does not constitute inclusion unless people with disabilities are valued contributing members

with a sense of belonging who are included in activities with people without disabilities.

People-First Language: Most disability organizations advocate putting the person first when speaking of people with disabilities. 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”.

Program Accessibility: Central requirement/standard under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 which requires that recipients of federal funds or contracts and /or state and local government entities operate programs and activities so that “when viewed in its entirety” such a program/activity is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.”

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

Reasonable Accommodation: Legal term defined by the ADA and Rehabilitation Act as “any modification or adjustment to a job or work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to perform essential job functions.” Examples include restructuring a job, modifying work schedules, acquiring or modifying work equipment, providing qualified readers for persons who are blind, and providing American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for individuals who are deaf.

Service animal: means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine

or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.

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

©**The National Service Inclusion Project** is a cooperative agreement (#01CAM0016) between the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston in collaboration with the Association of University Centers on Disabilities. For more information on the National Service Inclusion Project; <http://www.serviceandinclusion.org>

Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS): Established in 1993 under the National and Community Service Act. It gives more than a million United States citizens opportunities to improve communities through service. The Corporation supports service at the national, state and local levels, overseeing three main initiatives: AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and National Senior Service Corps. For more information on CNCS: <http://www.cns.gov>

Illinois Inclusion Team: Established September 2011 through the Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service. The mission of the Illinois Inclusion Team is to promote and support full participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of National and local community service organizations.

For more information about the Serve Illinois Commission visit: <http://www.serve.illinois.gov>
PH: 800- 592-9896
TTY: 217-557-4640

For more information about the Illinois Inclusion Team or the Serve Illinois Inclusion Project visit: barnhartl@kreiderservices.org
PH: 815-288-6691 ext. 282
TTY: 815-288-5931

Links for more information

ACCOMMODATIONS/ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY:

Illinois Assistive Technology Program

Assistive technology services and programs for people with disabilities in the state of Illinois, as well as resources for service providers, state agencies, private industry, educators, and other interested individuals.

(800) 852-5110 Voice/TTY

<http://www.iltech.org/>

Information on Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

<http://www.jan.wvu.edu/>

Information on assistive technology and rehabilitation equipment:

<http://www.abledata.com/>

Accessible Tech

Information on electronic information technology that is universally accessible.

<http://www.accessibletech.org/index.php>

Reasonable Accommodation Under the ADA

http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/hr_tips/article_1.cfm?b_id=20

Accommodations of Specific Disabilities

http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/hr_tips/article.cfm?group_id=4

Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employer's Practical Guide to Reasonable Accommodation Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

<http://askjan.org/Erguide/>

An EEOC fact sheet discussing which employers and what employment practices are covered and employer's obligations to provide reasonable accommodation

<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/ada17.html>.

ACCESSIBLE DESIGN

ADA Accessibility Guidelines

<http://www.access-board.gov/adaag/html/adaag.htm>.

[http://www.adagreatlakes.org/Publications/Factsheets/National ADA Center Fact Sheet 9 OVERVIEW OF 2010 STANDARDS OF DESIGN.pdf](http://www.adagreatlakes.org/Publications/Factsheets/National_ADA_Center_Fact_Sheet_9_OVERVIEW_OF_2010_STANDARDS_OF_DESIGN.pdf)

The Department of Justice has also compiled guidance on the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design. This explanatory information from the regulations addresses the scoping and technical provisions of the 2010 Standards. Learn more at

<http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADASTandards/2010ADAstandards.htm>

<http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADASTandards/Guidance2010ADAstandards.htm>.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Great Lakes ADA Center is available to provide training and to answer general and technical assistance questions on the Americans with Disabilities Act:

800-949-4232 (voice/TTY)

www.adagreatlakes.org

The Illinois ADA Project is funded by the [Great Lakes ADA Center](#) to provide ADA information to individuals and private and public organizations throughout Illinois.

[The Illinois ADA Project http://www.ada-il.org/](http://www.ada-il.org/)

The U.S. Department of Justice ADA Information Line is available for answers to technical questions:

800-514-0301 (voice)

800-514-0383 (TTY)

<http://www.ada.gov/>

INTERVIEWING

Focus on Ability: Interviewing Applicants with Disabilities

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/focus.htm>

Employer Tips on Interviewing Applicants with Disabilities

http://www.onestops.info/article.php?article_id=2

RECRUITMENT/HIRING/RETENTIN:

EARN supports employers in recruiting, hiring, retaining and advancing qualified individuals with disabilities.

<http://askearn.org/index.cfm>

Great Lakes ADA center

ADA Guide for Employers and Businesses

<http://www.adagreatlakes.org/BusinessToolkit/>

Office of Disability Employment Policy - Strategic Connections: Recruiting Candidates with Disabilities factsheet at

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/connect.htm>

[Diverse Perspectives: People with Disabilities Fulfilling Your Business Goals](http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/diverse.htm) from the Department of Labor at

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/diverse.htm>

SERVICE ANIMALS:

Commonly asked questions about service animals:

http://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm

[http://www.adagreatlakes.org/Publications/Factsheets/National ADA Center Fact Sheet 5 SERVICE ANIMALS.pdf](http://www.adagreatlakes.org/Publications/Factsheets/National_ADA_Center_Fact_Sheet_5_SERVICE_ANIMALS.pdf)

STATISTICS:

Annual Disability Statistics Compendium

<http://disabilitycompendium.org/home>

The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey

<http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/reports/acs.cfm>.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN:

Information on Universal Design (UD) use:

<http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/index.htm>

LINKS TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES/DISABILITY SERVICES:

Disability.gov is the federal government website for comprehensive information on disability programs and services in communities nationwide.

Disability.gov

Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities in Illinois

800-433-8848 Voice/TTY

<http://www.ccdionline.org/>

Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities

<http://www.state.il.us/agency/icdd/>

Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission

877-455-3323 Voice

888-261-2698 TTY

<http://www2.illinois.gov/idhhc/Pages/default.aspx>

Illinois Department of Human Services Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

(800) 843-6154 (Voice, English or Español)

(800) 447-6404 (TTY)

www.dhs.state.il.us/

Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living (INCIL)

(217) 525-1308 or (800) 587-1227

TTY: (217) 525-1308

<http://www.incil.org/>