

DISABILITY INCLUSION OVERVIEW

Persons with disabilities contribute to a wide range of talents to our communities and desire opportunities to serve in significant ways.

According to the latest U.S. Census, 15 % of Delawareans have a disability; 56.7 million Americans of all ages, races, ethnic backgrounds, economic levels and religious affiliations have some form of disability, many of which take the form of hidden disability.

Hidden disabilities include mental and cognitive disabilities, some hearing and visual impairments, alcoholism and addiction, epilepsy, diabetes, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Delaware National service programs, offer an excellent opportunity for persons with disabilities to serve their communities as well as provide these programs with a diverse team of members.

Visit these websites for more information:

- <http://www.servedelaware.org/>

Corporation for National and Community Service:

- <http://www.nationalservice.gov/>

National Service Inclusion Project:

- <http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/>
- <https://www.disability.gov/>



THE AMERICAN'S WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The philosophy of the American's With Disabilities Act (ADA) was based on a simple concept that soon became to be recognized as the "spirit of the law". Having become a familiar term and a widely understood concept among persons with disabilities, this simple phrase seems to have escaped the consciousness of the general public. This concept, simply stated, asks that whenever we consider people at all, we should think to include people with disabilities.

The enactment of the ADA showed a transformation in our Nation's public policies toward people with disabilities. America is now a dramatically different country because of the ADA, although these efforts are far from complete.

Many 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 more fully accessible, to ensure that people with disabilities are fully integrated into our communities and work places. We have come to appreciate that people with disabilities are a key element in sustaining our Nation's economic growth.

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.

Today, nearly one in five Americans has a disability. This means that disability touches all of lives in some shape or form. The ADA was intended to change our society so that having a disability would no longer limit individuals from achieving their full potential as individuals, community members, and citizens.

**The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the
difference between lightning and the lightning bug.
Mark Twain**

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The ADA applies to individuals with disabilities that substantially limit one or more major life activity. It provides clear and comprehensive standards addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

- Ensure that the Federal government plays a central role in enforcing the standards established in this act on behalf of individuals with disabilities.
- Regulate commerce addressing discrimination faced to day to day by people with disabilities.

The ADA covers people who:

- Are deaf, visually impaired or use a wheelchair
- Have physical conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, HIV infection, or severe forms of arthritis, hypertension, or carpal tunnel syndrome.
- have mental impairments such as depression, bipolar disorder, intellectual, cognitive or learning disabilities.

The following are covered under the ADA:

Employment

This applies to job application procedures, hiring, advancement and discharge of employees, workers compensation, job training, and other privileges of employment.

- Discrimination may include limiting or classifying a job applicant or Employee in an adverse way.
- Denying employment opportunities to people who qualify, or not making reasonable accommodations
Not advancing employees with disabilities in the business, and/or not providing needed accommodations in training materials OR policies, and the provision of qualified readers or interpreters.



THE ADA COVERS

State and Local Government Activities

Requires that State and local governments give people with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from all their programs, services, activities (public education, employment, transportation, recreation, health care, social services, courts, voting and town meetings).

Public Transportation

Public transportation authorities can not discriminate against people with disabilities and must comply with requirements for accessibility in newly purchased vehicles, make good faith efforts to purchase or lease accessible used buses, remanufacture buses in an accessible manner

Public Accommodations

Various businesses and nonprofit services must comply with architectural standards for new and altered buildings; reasonable accommodations to policies, practices, and procedures; effective communication with people with hearing, vision or speech disabilities. Public accommodations must remove barriers in existing building which will cover little expense.

Telecommunications Relay Services

Requires telephone companies to establish operating services which allows people who are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Speech-Disabled, or Deaf Blind to place calls to standard telephone users via a keyboard or assistive device.

ACCOMMODATION RESOURCES

It is always a good idea to contact technical assistance resources when an individual requests an accommodation that involves or modifying equipment, or involves structural changes. These are resources that are qualified to assist you.

- **Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI)**
Connects Delawareans who have disabilities with the tools in order to work, learn, play and participate in community life safely and independently. They can be reached at: 302-831-0354
- **Easter Seals Delaware & Maryland's Eastern Shore Assistive Technology Services/Assistive Technology Assessment**
Call (302) 221-2087 or (800) 677-3800 to schedule an assessment
- **Goodwill Delaware and Delaware County Medical Equipment Refurbishment Program**
Goodwill enables those in the community who might need equipment but are unable to buy it new. All of the medical and adaptive technology sold by Goodwill is refurbished to like-new condition And is completely sanitized for your protection.
Call (302) 504-1734

Once a member has completed their service, **The Job Accommodation Network (JAN)** can be another excellent resource that is available to you at no cost. JAN provides job opportunities for members who have completed their service. JAN can be reached at (800) 526-7234 (voice/TTY).

These resources are helpful and knowledgeable for efficient accommodations. They can identify accommodations that are often more effective then individuals who are not experts in accommodation services.

MEANS OF ACCOMMODATION

You are urged to reach out to members who can contribute a diverse set of skills and life experiences to your program

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 persons 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.

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 some cases, individuals will not be certain what they will need and how to secure it. There are several resources that you can call upon to assist you and the individual in evaluating appropriate and effective accommodations.

DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

TIPS ON INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Ask before you help

Just because someone has a disability, don't assume he/she needs help. If the environment is accessible, people with disabilities can usually get around fine. Offer assistance only if the person appears to need it..

Be sensitive

Some people with disabilities depend on their arms for balance. Grabbing them, even if your intention is to assist, could knock them off balance. Respect people's personal space. People with disabilities consider their equipment part of their personal space.

Think before you speak

Always speak directly to the person with a disability, not to his companion, aide or sign language interpreter. Making small talk with a person who has a disability is great. Respect his/her privacy. If you ask about the disability, they may feel like you are treating him/her as a disability, not as a human being. However, many people with disabilities are comfortable with questions about their disability after getting to know someone. A simple "I don't feel comfortable sharing that" by the person with a disability can set the tone if it is not something that he/she is willing to share.

Don't make assumptions

Do not make assumptions about what a person can or cannot do based on their disability. People with disabilities are the best judge of what they can or cannot do. Don't make decisions for them about participating in any activity. All people are different and have a wide variety of skills, including persons with disabilities.

Respond courteously to requests

When people who have disabilities ask for an accommodation at your business, it is not a complaint. It shows they feel comfortable enough in your establishment to ask for what they need.

Remember to always speak directly to a person with a disability.



People First Language

People First Language is a national movement to promote dignity and inclusion for people with disabilities. It is a respectful way of speech and refers to the individual first and the disability second. It's the difference in saying the autistic and a child with autism. It is important to change the language of our laws at the state and Federal levels. People First Language was signed into Delaware law August 17, 2011. The bill requires that all new state laws and publications, from the effective of the enactment of this bill into law, to avoid language that is disrespectful and/or offensive to people with disabilities.

Examples of People First Language

| Say This | Not This |
|---|--|
| people with disabilities | the handicapped, the disabled |
| people without disabilities | normal, healthy, whole or typical people |
| person who has a congenital disability | person with a birth defect |
| person who has (or has been diagnosed with) | person afflicted with, suffers from, a victim of... |
| person who has Down syndrome | Downs person, mongoloid, mongol |
| person who has (or has been diagnosed with) autism | the autistic |
| person with quadriplegia, person with paraplegia, person diagnosed with a physical disability | a quadriplegic, a paraplegic |
| person with a physical disability | a cripple |
| person of short stature, little person | a dwarf, a midget |
| person who is unable to speak, person who uses a communication device | dumb, mute |
| people who are blind, person who is visually impaired | the blind |
| person with a learning disability | learning disabled |
| person diagnosed with a mental health condition | crazy, insane, psycho, mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, demented |
| person diagnosed with a cognitive disability or with an intellectual and developmental disability | mentally retarded, retarded, slow, idiot, moron |
| student who receives special education services | special ed student, special education student |
| person who uses a wheelchair or a mobility chair | confined to a wheelchair; wheelchair bound |
| accessible parking, bathrooms, etc. | handicapped parking |