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| DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION | | Number: 4300-008 |
| SUBJECT: Reasonable Accommodations for Employees and Applicants with Disabilities | DATE: March 9, 2000 | |
| | OPI: Office of Civil Rights | |

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Departmental Regulation (DR) is to transmit the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Enforcement Guidance on Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Appendix A, that was issued on March 1, 1999. The 1992 amendment to Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, incorporates ADA, Title I employment guidance. This DR specifically:

a Implements the statute that provides coverage for Federal employees with disabilities and requires an employer to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified applicants or employees with disabilities, except when such accommodation would cause an undue hardship; and

b Clarifies the rights and responsibilities of employers and individuals with disabilities as they relate to reasonable accommodation and undue hardship.

2 POLICY

It is USDA policy to make reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of qualified applicants for employment and employees with disabilities unless such an accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the Department's activities and/or programs.

USDA will make reasonable accommodations for the removal of workplace barriers to the known physical or mental limitations of qualified applicants for employment and employees with disabilities, unless such accommodations would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the Department's activities and/or programs. It is the Department's policy to serve as a model employer of persons with disabilities and to accommodate employees and applicants with disabilities.

The attached enforcement guidance allows managers and supervisors to provide more than the minimum requirements whenever feasible, including accommodating individuals whose functional limitations do not rise to the definition of a "disability." USDA recognizes that all of its employees need the tools necessary to be productive, and that making reasonable accommodations is simply a way of providing the tools needed to accomplish its mission. USDA is committed to a simple and streamlined process for providing reasonable accommodations.

The Department's guiding principle is "When in doubt, accommodate!"

END

The EEOC guidance document can be found on-line at the following website:
<http://www.eeoc.gov/docs/accommodation.html>

For a paper copy of the EEOC Enforcement Guidance on Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), contact Ruth Brown, Information Management Division, OCIO, at 202-720-8958, or by e-mail at *ruth.brown@usda.gov*.