



ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR GRANTEES

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from discriminating against a qualified person with disabilities in any of their programs or activities. This applies to the Corporation's primary grantees and all subgrantees.

A "grantee" for civil rights purposes is any entity receiving monies, service members, or other assistance paid in whole or in part by Corporation funds. Every site or station where a full- or part-time service member is assigned is a "grantee." "Grantee" also includes any entity receiving funds from the Corporation and distributing the monies to other entities that conduct national service programs.¹

General rule. No qualified individual with disabilities shall, on the basis of disability, be denied the benefits of, be excluded from participation in, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by a Corporation grantee.

Facilities built before May 30, 1979. The Corporation's grantees shall operate each program or activity so that, when viewed in its entirety, it is readily accessible to and usable by disabled persons.²

Facilities built after May 30, 1979. Each building or part of one constructed or altered by or for the use of any grantee shall be designed, constructed, or altered to be readily accessible to and usable by disabled persons. Buildings complying with either the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards or the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines are presumed readily accessible.

TDD's or equally effective communications. Every grantee must ensure its communications with applicants, employees, service members, clients, and members of the public are available to persons with impaired vision and hearing. For example:

¹The Americans with Disabilities Act also applies to Corporation grantees. For State and local governments, the standards under the two statutes are similar. However, for other Corporation grantees, while both statutes apply, the higher standards of the Rehabilitation Act govern.

²This paragraph does not (1) require the grantees make each of its existing facilities accessible to and usable by disabled persons; or (2) require the grantees take any action that would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a program or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens.

- whenever correspondence, newsletters, press releases, etc. include a telephone number to contact, a TDD number, FAX number, and/or e-mail number should be listed as well -- e.g.: (202) 606-5000 (voice); (202) 565-2799 (TDD); (202) 565-2816 (FAX); eo@cns.gov.
- if letters are used in a telephone number, give a numeric number also, since visually impaired persons cannot easily find letters on a telephone (e.g., 1-800-JAN-7234; 1-800-526-7234 (voice/TDD))

Auxiliary aids. All grantees must take appropriate steps to insure that no disabled person is denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in any program or activity because of the absence of auxiliary aids for individuals with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills. For example:

- whenever announcements of meetings are issued, unless the universe of specific participants is known, potential participants need to be informed that accommodations such as interpreters or materials in alternate format (e.g., large print or audio cassette) will be available upon request (and notified how to request an accommodation)
- major public events should automatically have sign language interpreters

Public information. Every grantee must ensure that interested persons, including persons with impaired vision or hearing, can obtain information on the existence and location of accessible services, activities, and facilities. For example:

- caption videos and public service announcements
- notify the public that information (e.g., regulations, application forms, press releases and other PR material) are available upon request in alternate formats (and how to request the material in an alternate format)
- display the accessibility symbol at each primary entrance to each accessible facility, with signs at inaccessible facilities, directing users to a location where they can obtain information at an accessible facility

Meetings. All grantees must ensure all meetings which are available to the public are held in fully accessible locations, as are all meetings where a participant needs an accessible site.

- accessible facilities include meeting rooms, building entrances/lobbies, rest rooms, and any sleeping rooms, restaurants, banquet rooms used
- accessible communications include interpreters, captioned videos, auxiliary _voice over_ aids for videos with only music & visuals, audio cassettes or computer disks of written material, readers and/or personal assistants, and accessible telephones (TDD's at reception area, amplified public telephones, and amplified phones or TDD's in sleeping rooms)

Claims of discrimination. Any person who believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination in violation of the Rehabilitation Act may raise a claim with the Corporation's Equal Opportunity Office. However, claims not brought to the EO Office within 45 days of occurrence may not be accepted in a formal complaint of discrimination.

Our EO Office may be reached at:

(202) 606-5000, ext. 312 (voice),
(202) 565-2799 (TDD),
eo@cns.gov, or through www.nationalservice.org.

This document is available in alternate format upon request.