

# Equal Opportunity for Individuals With Disabilities



Every American deserves the opportunity to live a full and productive life, with the chance to find a safe place to live, gain meaningful employment and fully participate in all aspects of society. However, for individuals with disabilities, taking advantage of these opportunities can present unique challenges.

## Background

Historically, people with disabilities have been subject to discrimination in areas such as housing, employment, education, transportation, health services and much more. Whether it is a failure to modify an existing facility to accommodate someone with a physical disability or exclusionary qualification standards for a job position, individuals with disabilities have consistently encountered various forms of discrimination and often have no legal recourse.

## Title 42, U.S. Code, Chapter 126, "Equal Opportunity for Individuals with Disabilities"

In enacting the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Congress intended to "provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities." The ADA was later codified in Title 42, Chapter 126, of the U.S. Code.

According to this law, it is the nation's responsibility to ensure that "individuals with disabilities are assured equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency."

## The purpose of this law is to:

- Provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities
- Provide clear, strong, consistent, enforceable standards addressing discrimination
- Ensure that the federal government plays a central role in enforcing the standards

- Invoke the sweep of congressional authority to address the major areas of discrimination faced by people with disabilities

## What this looks like

To ensure the law is carried out with the intent in which it was written, people with disabilities must be provided with the opportunity to live a full and productive life. This may include accommodations such as:

- Qualified interpreters or other effective methods of delivering materials to individuals with hearing impairments
- Acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, such as lowering the height of a desk to accommodate a person who uses a wheelchair
- Public transportation programs and activities that are accessible and usable to individuals with disabilities
- A quiet, distraction-free workspace for a worker with attention deficit disorder
- Job notices posted in an accessible format for individuals with disabilities

Title 42, U.S. Code, Chapter 126, "Equal Opportunity for Individuals with Disabilities," is meant to protect individuals with disabilities and allow all of us to benefit from their skills and talents, enabling us to lead fuller, more meaningful lives.

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-and-relationships/special-needs>

Exceptional Family Member Program support is available for military families with special needs.

For more information, please contact your installation EFMP office or visit

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-and-relationships/special-needs>, an official Department of Defense website.