Inclusion

Creating an Inclusive Environment: A Handbook for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in National and Community Service Programs

Everybody can be great because anybody can serve.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

Created in 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service engages more than 2 million Americans annually in improving communities through service. The Corporation supports service at national, state and local levels through:

- Senior Corps, a network of programs that helps Americans age 55 and older use their skills and experience in service opportunities that address the needs of their communities. Senior Corps includes RSVP, The Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program.

- AmeriCorps, whose members serve with local and national organizations to meet community needs while earning education awards to help finance college or training. And

- Learn and Serve America, which helps link community service and learning objectives for youth from kindergarten through college as well as youth in community-based organizations.

Upon request, this material will be made available in alternate formats for people with disabilities.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 3

Section

I: Inclusive Service Environments 4

II: People with Disabilities 10

III: Inclusive Service Descriptions 15

IV: Inclusive Recruitment and Outreach 21

V: Inclusive Interviewing and Service Selection 28

VI: Access 32

VII: Accommodations 38

VIII: Management and Retention 43

IX: Collaborations 49

X: Progress Towards Inclusion 53

XI: Government Benefits and Participation in Service Programs 57

Section XII: Legal Requirements 61

Appendix A Glossary 69

Appendix B Sample of Self-Evaluation Checklist 75

Appendix C Tips for Presenting in Audiences with People with Disabilities 79

Appendix Resources. 80

This Handbook will assist you as you work to fully and meaningfully include individuals with disabilities in your national and community service program. It is not intended to constitute legal or other professional advice and it will not necessarily provide you with solutions to the complex situations or legal interpretations that may arise. It is, however, designed to provide you with accurate information. If you need legal advice or other expert assistance, your best course of action would be to consult a competent professional. You will find specific resources to assist you in different areas of outreach, recruitment, selection, and retention of participants with disabilities in national and community service. Please feel free to provide feedback to Jewel Bazilio at jbazilio@cns.gov at the Corporation for National and Community Service.

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Introduction

Introduction

People with disabilities are joining the world of service in increasing numbers. Just like their able-bodied peers, they see a need in their communities and want to contribute to creating a better world for all. Whether it is teaching children to read, repairing trails, helping seniors remain independent in their homes, or increasing public safety, people with disabilities are contributing.

Service is not always easy. We know that if we want service to be successful and if we want to retain committed individuals in our programs, we need to facilitate experiences that are rewarding and meaningful. The easier it is to serve, the more likely one will continue to serve.

For people with disabilities, the world of service is often fraught with barriers. Barriers are often inadvertent and exist out of ignorance, fear, and concern. Barriers are removed through training, technical assistance, collaboration, and the development of inclusive practices, teamwork, and respect.

All programs receiving funds from the CNCS or other federal agencies must comply with federal laws that guarantee equal access and prohibit discrimination. But mere compliance does not necessarily ensure the full and meaningful participation of people with disabilities in national and community service. An inclusive service environment does.

An inclusive service environment is more than ensuring an accessible building, providing a sign language interpreter or creating large print documents. It is more than refraining from illegal interview questions or violating confidentiality. Rather, an inclusive service environment welcomes all people, regardless of their disability. It recognizes and uses their skills and strengthens their abilities. An inclusive service environment is respectful, supportive, and equalizing. An inclusive service environment reaches out to and includes individuals with disabilities at all levels — from first time participants to board members.

This Handbook is not a compliance manual. It will help you begin to understand the law and will serve as a resource and source of guidance and technical assistance.

This Handbook will help you understand the concept and ideal of inclusion. It will help you in your outreach efforts to the talented community of persons with disabilities in your community. It will help you develop the skills of all of your participants. It will help you become a better manager. Most of all, it will ensure the valuable contributions of many more individuals.

In the past 30 years, the world has changed dramatically for people with disabilities. More opportunities exist now than ever before. As a society, we have much more to do, however, and our work will only be complete when all individuals, regardless of their disability, are fully included. This Handbook will help you begin.

Inclusive Service Environments

What is an inclusive service environment?

What are the elements of an inclusive service environment?

Does language matter?

Section I:
Inclusive Service Environments

Key Words and Terms
Accommodations
Inclusive Service Environment
People First Language

What is an inclusive service environment?

Creating an inclusive service environment is challenging, thought provoking, and rewarding. It is a continuous process, one that evolves and responds to changes in the environment or in policies. It becomes an integral part of all that you do, from kick-offs to celebrations, from recruitment to retention, from policy to practice. It impacts team-building and participant development. It is an integral part of strategic planning 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 who are already in that environment. A program manager who thinks first about what someone can do is sure to be more inclusive than one who thinks about an individual's limitations. A program manager who uses "people first" language is already aware that individuals with physical or mental limitations are people before they are disabled. 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.

What are the elements of an inclusive service environment?

An inclusive service environment ensures the respect and dignity of

individuals with disabilities. It does not pry into medical histories or diagnoses, and it guards against the casual exchange of privileged information. It speaks and listens to the individual with a disability. It understands that personal preference in accommodation is often a personal need. It is flexible when necessary.

The built environment — paths, doors, rooms, restrooms, kitchens — of an inclusive service environment meets current accessibility standards to the greatest extent possible. Accessibility is considered when planning events, seeking program or meeting space, and evaluating placement sites. When you move desks or serve refreshments, give consideration to ensuring the continued ability of persons with mobility, hearing, visual, and cognitive disabilities to continue to use the space independently. There are community organizations that can assist you in considering accessibility, as well as numerous guides and checklists.

TIP
Ensuring that background noise in meetings is minimized helps everyone at the meeting.

An inclusive service environment willingly and proactively provides accommodations. When requests are made and questions arise, the individual making the request is asked for clarification first before anyone else. In an inclusive service environment, the first considerations are ensuring access, opportunity, independence, and dignity; not cost or inconvenience.

TIP
There should always be a 36-inch wide path to all areas.

In an inclusive service environment, persons with disabilities are welcomed and are valued for their contributions as individuals. The presence of a disability is not seen as a detriment. Rather, disability is valued as part of the range of diversity that exists in the human condition. In some cases, a disability can present challenges that allow program staff and participants to grow and to enhance their knowledge and skills. In an inclusive service environment, staff and participants work with the goal of ensuring full inclusion and participation of an individual with a disability. Everyone is aware that excusing an individual from activities (e.g., "It is okay if you don't come to the meeting

because it is in an inaccessible location.") or denying information (e.g., "Never mind that you cannot hear the training, it is not that important anyway.") are exclusive actions. In an inclusive service environment, full participation is not the goal — it is the action.

TIP
Providing accommodations can assist in full participation in all activities.

An inclusive service environment understands 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 sees individuals, not stereotypes.

Interacting with People with Disabilities — Some Basic Etiquette

- Always be aware of barriers, both permanent and temporary.
- When talking to a person with a disability, speak directly to the person. If there is a companion or interpreter present, always direct your comments to the person with the disability.
- Never assume that a person with a disability needs your assistance. It is always polite to offer your assistance, but once you have offered, wait for a reply before acting. If the person accepts your offer, wait to be directed. Do not be offended if your offer of assistance is not accepted; many persons with disabilities would rather do things for themselves whenever possible.
- Do not assume that a person with a physical disability also has a cognitive disability.
- Never lean on a person's wheelchair. A chair is often considered an extension of the body and leaning on it is the same as leaning directly on the person. If you bump into a person's wheelchair, say, "Excuse me." It's the same as bumping into the person directly. When talking to a person in a wheelchair, try to sit so that you are at eye level.
- When interacting with a person who has difficulty with attention or short-term memory, face the person and maintain eye contact. Use short sentences and give instructions in increments.
- Assistive devices (canes, crutches, wheelchairs, walkers, communication boards, etc.) should be respected as extensions of the person or as personal property. Do not move or play with them without permission from the user.
- When talking with a person who is blind or has a visual impairment, always identify yourself at the beginning of the conversation and remember to inform the person when you are ending the conversation, changing location, or leaving the area. Never hold the person's arm while walking; let her hold your arm. This will allow her to walk slightly behind you and get a sense of what to expect from the motion of your body. Ask if the person would like verbal cues as to what is ahead when you approach steps, curbs, or other barriers.

- Never pet or call to a service animal when the animal is in a harness. The harness tells the animal that it is time to work and its attention needs to be focused on its master. When the animal is at rest or out of harness, you may ask the owner for permission to pet it.

- When talking with an adult with a cognitive or psychiatric disability, do not speak as you would to a child. Use age-appropriate language and mannerisms. Also, do not assume that because a person may not speak, that they are unable to understand or hear you.

- When talking with a person with a psychiatric disability, make eye contact and be aware of your body language. Be patient and understanding, and speak normally – mental illness does not mean an inability to hear or understand language. It also does not mean that someone will behave inappropriately.

- When speaking with a person who is Deaf or has a hearing loss, always look directly at the person. Keep your mouth and face free of hands or shadows. Do not speak with exaggerated slowness or with exaggerated facial expressions. As is proper telephone etiquette with all persons, speak clearly and distinctly when leaving voice mail messages. Also, do not shout; an increase in volume may actually make it more difficult for the person to understand you.

- If you are speaking with a person with impaired speech, listen carefully and repeat what you've heard. Don't pretend to understand if you don't, and don't give up and say, "Never mind, it wasn't important." That tells the person you're talking to that you don't value his input enough to continue the conversation. Also allow more time for a conversation with a person with a speech impairment; do not rush him or try to finish his sentences.

- Fear is one of the main reasons why we are reluctant to interact with people with disabilities – do not let fear of making a mistake, fear of saying the wrong thing, or fear of the unknown make you reluctant to interact with people with disabilities. The greatest mistake we can make is to exclude people with disabilities because of those fears. If you make a mistake, acknowledge it, apologize, and move on.

Does language matter?

Language often shapes our perception. Using "people first" ("person with a disability", "person with a visual impairment") helps remind us and others that people with disabilities are people first, and are more than their disability.

Instead of:	Use:	Because:
The Handicapped	Persons with Disabilities	Handicapped is derived from "cap in hand" and implies that someone is dependent on society
The Disabled	Persons with Disabilities	One is a person before one is disabled
Wheelchair Bound, Confined to a Wheelchair	Uses a Wheelchair or Wheelchair User	A wheelchair is not confining—it allows movement from one place to another
Birth Defect	Congenital Disability	Persons with disabilities are not defective
Crippled	Has a Disability	Crippled comes from Old English "to creep" and is also used as an an adjective meaning inferior
Mongoloid	Persons with Down Syndrome	Mongoloid is a racist term
Mental, Crazy, Psycho, Insane, Nut Case	Person with Mental Illness	These are offensive and negative stereotypes
Normal, Healthy, Whole	Non-Disabled	People with disabilities may also be normal, healthy, and whole
Deaf and Dumb, Deaf-Mute	Person who is Deaf or a Person who Does Not Speak	Simply because someone is deaf does not mean they cannot speak, and they are not dumb

People with Disabilities

What it has meant, and what it means, to have a disability: A brief historical overview of social perceptions.

How many people with disabilities are there?

What is the definition of disability?

Section II:
People with Disabilities

Key Words and Terms
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
Community-Based Living
Functional Limitations
Major Life Activity
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
Substantially Limits
Three-Part Definition of a Person with a Disability

What it has meant, and what it means, to have a disability: A brief historical overview of social perceptions.

Disabling conditions have always separated those who have them from the mainstream experience of culture and society. In the beginning of human existence, in hunter and gatherer cultures, those born with disabling conditions or those who acquired disabilities were killed or left to die because they would weaken the group and threaten its survival. In the Middle Ages, the presence of a disability was seen as punishment of sin or resulting from witchcraft. In the 18th and 19th centuries, persons with disabilities were confined to attics or basements, sent to institutions, or regarded as invalids who were confined to bed. Even in the 20th century, babies born with disabilities were sent to institutions as an act of humanity where they could live with their "own kind." People with disabilities were victimized during the Holocaust and were freely used as subjects in experiments.

Up until the 20th century, the number and range of types of identified disabilities were far more limited. Certainly, there were persons with cognitive and psychiatric disabilities, persons with visual impairments, and those who had some form of mobility impairment. Deaf culture

began to emerge in the 19th century.

In the 20th century, however, tremendous advances were made in medicine that enabled persons with disabilities to survive and so the sheer number of persons with disabilities increased.

During the 1940's several important things happened. The development of penicillin in World War II allowed soldiers to survive war injuries and return home. It also assured the survival of thousands who would have otherwise died from infection. Polio epidemics left many children and adults alive, but limited in mobility. Improved prenatal care and obstetrics led to the survival of infants with congenital disabilities who previously would not have survived. Still, persons with disabilities were sent to institutions, nursing homes, or confined to their homes.

During the 1970's, in conjunction with other civil rights movements, the disability rights and deinstitutionalization movements began to emerge. The deinstitutionalization movement began when improvements in psychiatric treatment led to the ability of persons with mental illness to function in community-based settings. It paved the way for group homes and supported living arrangements for persons who were formerly institutionalized. Today, institutional care is almost nonexistent, and most large, state-run facilities have closed their doors. Today, too, most individuals with cognitive disabilities live in communities.

The disability rights movement emerged and echoed the themes of other movements — individual choice, equal opportunity, and the right of participation. This movement led to laws that created a right for all children with disabilities to receive a free and appropriate education in a regular classroom with their able-bodied peers. It led to the development of independent living centers, the majority of which are controlled and staffed by people with disabilities. It succeeded in

obtaining passage of several federal laws that advance the civil rights of persons with disabilities. These are Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Air Carrier Access Act, the Fair Housing Act Amendments, and perhaps the most well known and far reaching, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

How many people with disabilities are there?

There are approximately 50 million Americans with disabilities (2000 Census, www.census.gov). While it is almost impossible to make generalizations about a group this large, here are some ideas to keep in mind:

- People with disabilities are often more limited by attitudes, environments, or policies than by a disability.
- The incidence of disability occurs in every socioeconomic, ethnic, religious, and racial group.
- Each person with a disability experiences it differently.
- Many people with disabilities regard their disability as a personal characteristic, or a "part of who they are."

We know we are beginning to understand that people, regardless of how severe their disability, are still people. We know conditions such as addiction or HIV/AIDS are disabling. We know that newly identified medical conditions can result in disabilities, such as the effects of Lupus, Multiple Sclerosis, or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

There are many kinds of disabilities, and each impacts individuals differently. Moreover, the same disability can impact individuals very differently even when it is the same level of severity. It is difficult to make any generalizations.

What is the definition of disability?

There are many definitions of a disability. Some definitions focus on

medical conditions, while others focus on the functional limitations that result from disability. Different federal and state laws and programs use different definitions. There are many people who have medical conditions that are disabling, but that does not necessarily mean that they meet the definition of "disability" that is laid out in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and in the Americans with Disabilities Act. To be protected by these federal laws, an individual must meet the definition described in the law.

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, a person with a disability is one who:

1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or

2) has a history of such an impairment; or

3) is perceived or "regarded as" having such an impairment, even when the impairment does not exist.

There are some important components to this three-part definition.

The phrase major life activities means functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

Substantially limits means unable to perform a **major life activity**, or significantly restricted in the condition, manner, or duration it can be performed, when compared to most people in the general population. The determination that a disability **substantially limits** an individual in performing major life activities is made on a case-by-case basis. It is not based merely on the existence of a condition (a physical or mental impairment), but on the impact of that impairment on an individual's ability to perform major life activities.

The definition of disability considers the impact of the impairment. There is no comprehensive list of protected disabilities because there

Example

Major Life Activity: **Janice, an RSVP participant, is paralyzed from the waist down and is substantially limited in the major life activity of walking. She is considered to have a disability.**

Michael, a VISTA volunteer who has a bad knee that hurts when he plays soccer, does not meet the definition. He is not substantially limited in the major life activity of walking, and soccer is not considered a major life activity.

Example

History of Impairment: **Clarice, a Foster Grandparent, has an addiction to alcohol and is in recovery. She may not have a disability now, but she is protected against discrimination based on her history of addiction.**

are so many conditions that can result in disability. Also, an impairment for one person may substantially limit a major life activity, while someone else may not be substantially limited. Determinations must be made on a case-by-case-basis. See Section XII: Legal Requirements in this Handbook for further discussion.

Example

Perception of Disability:

Wendy's behavior seems "strange" to the program supervisor, and the supervisor thinks that she has a psychiatric disability. If the supervisor takes action against her based on her misperception that Wendy has a disability Wendy is protected against discrimination under the "perception of disability" part of the definition.

Inclusive Service Descriptions

What are the elements of an inclusive service description?

What is an essential function?

What is a marginal function?

What is the definition of a "Qualified Individual with a Disability"?

Section III:
Inclusive Service Descriptions

Key Words and Terms
Accommodations
Essential Functions
Marginal Functions
Qualified Individual with a Disability
Service Description

What are the elements of an inclusive service description?

Inclusive service descriptions contain all the elements of a good service description, but also clearly demonstrate the essential and marginal functions of a position. They are a critical first step to creating an inclusive service environment. Taking the time to ensure that your service descriptions are inclusive will assist you in outreach and recruitment. It will send a clear message that you are actively inclusive and will help you make good management decisions.

Matching an applicant with a disability and a service position is virtually the same as matching any other applicant with a service position. Spending time to create a current, thorough, and clear service description is well worth the energy and will increase your ability to make good matches for all participants.

Evaluate service positions periodically. Positions change and you should reflect those changes in the service description. An essential function is one that is critical to the position. Teaching is an essential function of a tutoring position. A marginal function is less important: the nature of the position does not change if the function is removed. Answering the telephone might be a marginal function for a tutor. The key objective of a service description is to identify the functions of the position that are essential.

What is an essential function?

An essential function is a task or service duty that is critical to the position. If it is not performed, then the nature of the position is fundamentally changed.

Three factors that make a function essential:

- the position exists to perform a specific function;
- there are a limited number of other participants available to perform the function or among whom the function can be distributed; and
- a function is highly specialized and the person in the position is selected for special expertise or ability to perform it.

The chart below provides explanatory examples.

The position exists to perform a specific function	There are a limited number of other par ticipants available to perform the function or among whom the function can be distributed	A function is highly specialized, and the person in the position is selected for special expertise or ability to perform it
Example **Participant will provide education through public speaking and information dissemination.**	**Example** **Participant will have a commercial vehicle driver's license.**	**Example** **Participant must have the ability to understand and communicate in Spanish and English.**
Example **Participant will read stories to preschool children in their homes.**	**Example** **Participant must have previous experience installing drywall.**	**Example** **Participant will provide estate planning legal advice to participants at the senior day care center.**

When identifying essential functions:

- Identify the purpose and importance of the tasks
- Consider the frequency with which the task is performed

- Consider the amount of time required to perform the function
- Consider the consequences if the function is not performed
- Distinguish between the methods and results, i.e., focus on the end result rather than the method
- Essential functions must be completed, but they can often be completed in any variety of ways rather than in one particular manner

Identifying the essential functions will be invaluable when:

- Interviewing applicants
- Determining the qualifications of applicants
- Identifying accommodations for qualified applicants with a disability
- Ensuring a meaningful experience for participants

TIP
In essence, marginal functions are less critical and significant.
ple: "Participants will sweep the floor at the end of the arts and crafts session."

What is a marginal function?

A marginal function is one that is part of a service position, but not essential. It may be a task that is done on an as-needed basis; or a task that can be easily reassigned. Analyzing service functions is crucial in determining if they are essential or marginal.

TIP
The essential and marginal functions of a position will vary depending on your program and resources.

When identifying marginal functions:

- Identify the purpose and necessity of the task
- Consider whether the task is critical to the service position; if it is not performed, will the nature of the position be fundamentally changed?
- Consider if the task can be performed on an as-needed basis
- Consider if the task can be easily reassigned

Service task:
Participants will provide homework help to third grade students at an after-school program. Participants will occasionally fix snacks for students as needed.

The essential functions:
Ability to read and explain third grade subject matter, ability to communicate effectively with children.

The marginal function:
Fixing snacks at the end of the tutoring session.

Service Task:
Participants will establish committees of residents in low-income housing to promote self-sufficiency and drug/crime prevention programs.

The essential functions:
Effective communication, diplomacy and tact, planning, organization, and follow through on activities and goals.

The marginal functions:
Answering telephones, computer skills, and boxing and transporting materials to meetings.

What is the definition of a "Qualified Individual with a Disability"?

A "qualified individual with a disability" is able to perform the essential functions of the position with or without accommodations. He or she must also meet any qualifications or certifications that the program has in place, such as being a registered nurse. Simply because someone may be a person with a disability does not mean that you must accept him or her to serve as a participant in your program. The individual must meet the same qualifications as other participants in the program. Individuals who wish to be participants must be able to perform the essential functions of the position with or without accommodations.

Service Description Template

Service Position Title	Indicate title and whether a full- or part-time position.
Immediate Supervisor/Title	List name and/or title.
Service Position Summary	Briefly describe the responsibilities of the position in a narrative format.
Essential Functions of Position	List all basic duties that must be performed with or without reasonable accommodations. Identify only the tasks essential to the position. Focus on function, not "how to's." For example, if the essential function is to get from A to B to conduct training, do not say driving or a driver's license is required.
Marginal Functions of Position	List additional duties that are preferred, are re-assignable to others, or can be eliminated or otherwise do not change the nature of the position.
Principal Working Relationships	Identify internal and external working relationships required for successful accomplishment of responsibilities.
Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities	Identify the specific areas of knowledge and abilities required to be qualified for the position, as well as any required skills.
Academic and Experience Qualifications	List minimum qualifications and experience required to be eligible for the position. Do not include "nice to have's."
Service Conditions	Identify the conditions under which the position must be accomplished. For example, service is to be performed in a classroom, or service is performed primarily outdoors, or service involves travel outside the state.
Physical, Emotional, and Intellectual Demands	Identify the degree to which these demands are applied to the requirements of the position. An example of an emotional demand might be:

Patience is required because of work with children with cognitive disabilities. An example of an intellectual demand might be: Duties include extensive research and analysis of data.

Equipment Used

List the types of tools and equipment used in this position.

Other than completion of marginal functions, the above functions may be completed with or without accommodations. This description lists the minimum duty requirements.

Inclusive Recruitment and Outreach

How do I successfully recruit people with disabilities in national and community service?

How can I make recruitment activities inclusive?

Where can I recruit people with disabilities?

Are there organizations in my community that can help me recruit individuals with disabilities?

How do I collaborate with a disability organization to strengthen my outreach and recruitment activities?

Section IV: Inclusive Recruitment and Outreach

Key Words and Terms

Access
Accommodations
Alternate Formats
Barrier Free Design
Inclusive Service Environment
Relay Service
TDD/TTY

How do I successfully recruit people with disabilities in national and community service?

There are two basic approaches to recruitment of persons with disabilities as participants in your program. The first is to recruit persons with disabilities as part of your overall recruitment process. This will happen naturally as your program becomes increasingly accessible and inclusive. The second approach is to conduct specific outreach activities with communities of persons with disabilities and organizations that serve these communities.

How can I make recruitment activities inclusive?

The first step toward inclusive recruitment is creating an inclusive service environment. An inclusive service environment is one that proactively seeks to include persons with disabilities, ensures that everyone can make a valued contribution, and weaves access and accommodations into all aspects of the program. There are several ways that you can ensure that your recruitment activities are inclusive:

- Include images of people with disabilities as service providers in your brochures, videos, and other materials.
- Make sure that any videos you produce are captioned and audio-described.

Example

Sample Statement: Qualified individuals with disabilities who need accommodations may make arrangements by contacting (insert your program contact person and number/email).

- Make a clear statement of your willingness to provide accommodations.
- Familiarize your staff with your state relay services or your TDD/TTY number.
- Insert a non-discrimination clause in all of your written materials.
- Proactively let the public know that you will provide materials in alternate formats.
- Ensure that your website is accessible (good information on how to incorporate accessibility features on your website can be found at www.cast.org).
- Be sure your application forms ask no questions regarding disabilities, history of disabilities (the applicant or their family), or other medical information – unless it requests a voluntary response that is separated and filed separately and used for statistical purposes only.
- Identify organizations or individuals in your community with disability experience who can review materials to ensure that your language is appropriate.
- Hold meetings and events in locations that are barrier free, and let people know the events are accessible.

Example
Sample Statement:
This document and others are available in alternate formats.

Example
Sample Statement:
The AmeriCorps kick-off event will be held in an accessible location. Other accommodations will be provided upon request. Please contact (insert your program contact person and number/email).

Outreach to Persons with Disabilities

People with disabilities are in every community, organization, and neighborhood. Disability crosses all demographic groups. People with disabilities are young and old, rich, poor and middle-class, highly educated and not. Some individuals with disabilities are very committed to service; while others have never been exposed to service. Some have not had a lot of experience working alongside people without disabilities; others have.

Program Preparedness

Before you begin to aggressively recruit, make sure that your staff, participants, and whomever else may be involved in recruitment are pre-

pared for this initiative. It will not help your efforts to do great outreach and have staff unprepared for persons who request accommodations! Be sure to provide training to all staff and participants.

Where can I recruit people with disabilities?

There are several free national recruitment resources provided either directly by the federal government or through federal grants. While they exist primarily to help persons with disabilities find employment, you may be able to use them to identify persons with disabilities who are open to service opportunities. Some provide you directly with resumes or job-related information about people with disabilities, while others work in conjunction with state and local agencies. These include the resources listed below; more complete information about them is contained in Appendix D of this Handbook. All are available to you for assistance in recruiting participants for your programs.

- Employment Assistance Referral Network (EARN)
- Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP)
- State Governors' Committees on Employment of People with Disabilities
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- State and Local Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies

Another resource that allows people with disabilities to locate and contact you is the Corporation for National and Community Service recruitment web site: www.nationalservice.org. We encourage you to post your national service positions there. There is also Job Links, a service provided by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, which takes prospective job applicants to job listings on the Internet employment pages of organizations seeking to hire people with disabilities.

CNCS has awarded funds to 11 agencies to conduct outreach to disability communities. These agencies are promoting national service as an option and are developing training and promotional materials. Refer to the CNCS's web page: www.nationalservice.org for further

information on this subject.

Many disability organizations provide recruitment and placement assistance to individuals with particular types of disabilities. A comprehensive listing, compiled under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, may be found at www.nichcy.org.

There are also organizations and programs in every community, as well as at the national level, that work with people with disabilities. Many are federally operated and or funded. Some provide services to people with disabilities such as therapies or training. Others advocate in the community for increased accessibility. Some provide scholarships and awards, while others provide funding for education or job training. Some organizations serve a range of individuals with different kinds of disabilities, while others focus on one or two specific kinds of disabilities.

Depending on your program and the organizations in your community, the following kinds of organizations may be appropriate for your recruitment efforts.

- Schools, Colleges, and Technical Schools
- Vocational Rehabilitation Offices
- Disability Organizations
- Support Groups
- Civic Groups
- Senior Organizations
- Youth Organizations with Programs for Youth with Disabilities
  State and Federally Funded Community and National Resources

Are there organizations in my community that can help me recruit individuals with disabilities?

Schools, Colleges, University Centers of Excellence and Technical Schools

Almost all post-secondary schools have an office for students with disabilities. Staff in these offices can provide information about your program to students with a range of disabilities. Many have bulletin

boards where you can post information. Some have campus-wide newsletters.

School districts have offices on special education. These offices are aware of all students identified with disabilities, including those who are fully mainstreamed in their classrooms. In addition, most schools have special education teachers who know students with disabilities well.

Vocational Rehabilitation Offices

Each state has an office of vocational rehabilitation that in turn has local offices. Vocational rehabilitation counselors, who assist individuals with disabilities in achieving educational and vocational goals, staff these offices. Counselors will know of individuals with disabilities who may be interested in service programs. In addition, there are instances where national and community service programs may become part of a vocational plan, in which case additional supports may be available from vocational rehabilitation programs.

Disability Organizations

Even the smallest community has at least one or two organizations that work with people with disabilities from the very young to the very old. Here are some of the most common:

- Parent resource centers
- Self advocacy groups
- Independent living centers
- National Mental Health Association affiliates
- UCP affiliates
- Arc affiliates
- Brain Injury Association affiliates
- National Association of the Deaf groups
- Self Help for Hard of Hearing chapters
- Lighthouses (visually impaired)
- Easter Seals affiliates

Support Groups

All communities have support or self-help groups for a variety of issues that people face in their lives. In most communities there is a "self-help clearinghouse." Often, self-help groups are listed in local papers.

Civic Groups

Many civic groups support disability issues and may conduct fundraising activities on behalf of scholarship programs or under special circumstances. Some are:

- Civitans
- Kiwanis
- Lions
- Quota Clubs

Youth Organizations

- Boy and Girl Scouts
- 4-H
- Campfire programs
- YMCA/YWCA

Senior Organizations

- Senior Centers
- AARP

State and Federally Funded Community and National Resources

- See list of resources in Appendix D.

How do I collaborate with a disability organization to strengthen my outreach and recruitment activities?

Sending recruitment information to community organizations may result in a few inquiries but it probably will not generate significant interest. If staff at these organizations do not know you, do not understand national and community service, or do not know your program in particular, they are not likely to do much with your material.

The success of many initiatives is based on collaborative relationships. There are a number of ways that you can initiate collaboration. A personal visit with the staff of an organization allows you to share the world of service and its potential benefits for people with disabilities.

Example

Collaboration

Hector, the program director for an AmeriCorps*VISTA program, met with the director of the independent living center and did a presentation at a staff meeting. Angela, a Foster Grandparent program director, wrote newsletter articles for the County Office for Persons with Disabilities.

You can meet with staff individually, or perhaps ask to attend a staff meeting.

Even more, you can organize a service day or project in conjunction with a disability organization. This activity can help them experience the rewards of service first hand and build personal relationships that will be valuable to you as you recruit persons with disabilities in your program. Most communities have local or statewide disability related conferences or meetings. Many have space for exhibitors. You may be able to recruit and publicize your program at the same time.

You can also place ads in disability organization newsletters, or even better, offer to write an article about service opportunities for a newsletter.

Meetings and Events

Meetings and events, whatever the purpose, are great ways to let people with disabilities know that you are serious about providing access and that you are serious about inclusion. To be inclusive means that you are thinking about accessibility in all of your activities, not just when you know there may be people with disabilities present. There are opportunities for recruitment no matter what the purpose of your meeting or event.

- Always let the public know that you will provide accommodations to those who need them.
- Always hold your meeting or event in an accessible location.

Example

Collaboration

In Maryland, the State Commission funds inclusive service projects with agencies that serve people with disabilities to perform service to benefit a third party. For example, an AmeriCorps program that tutors at-risk youth partnered with a local Arc chapter to clean and paint the gymnasium of a local youth center together.

This joint service project gave the AmeriCorps program the opportunity to see people with disabilities as active service providers, and individuals with disabilities were able to learn about and experience AmeriCorps. The community benefited from the service performed. This type of partnership can be replicated across all national service programs.

Inclusive Interviewing and Service Selection

Can I ask disability-related questions or request medical information as part of my selection process?

What do I do if an applicant raises the issue of his or her disability or requests accommodations during the interview?

Section V: Inclusive Interviewing and Service Selection

Key Words and Terms
Disability-Related Inquiry

The interview and selection process for participants is an area that has many legal do's and don'ts and can be intimidating for program staff. In most cases when errors are made they are not because of an intent to discriminate, but because the interviewer wants to help, desires more information, or wants to clarify information. An inclusive interview and selection process focuses on what an individual can contribute to his or her community through service and what the program can bring to the individual. The existence of a disability is a secondary consideration.

The issues discussed in this chapter will guide you in developing an inclusive interview protocol. Additional information can be found in the Legal Requirements section of this Handbook.

Can I ask disability-related questions or request medical information as part of my selection process?

No. You may not ask disability-related questions and you may not request medical information prior to offering the position to the applicant. There are very specific rules to protect persons with disabilities. These rules protect the rights of all persons and allow applicants to be assessed on merit alone. An inclusive manager focuses on an applicant's abilities to perform the essential functions and not on speculation about possible disabilities.

An interview is often a conversation, and conversations with different applicants will often cover topics in different ways. It is important, however, to ask ALL applicants the SAME questions. This will help ensure that you do not inadvertently obtain information from one

Basic Tips for Interviewing

- **Face person for interviewing**
- **Interview only in accessible locations**
- **Use the service description as a guide**
- **Create a list of questions to ask all applicants**

applicant that you do not obtain from all applicants.

During the interview, focus on questions regarding the ability of an applicant to perform the essential functions of the position with or without accommodations. Even if an applicant has a visible disability, do not make assumptions about his or her ability or the accommodations that he or she will need.

In rare instances, service programs will require medical examinations of applicants. In no instance may you require a medical exam prior to an offer of a position, but your offer may be contingent on the results of a medical exam. If you require a medical examination after a contingent offer is made, you must require it of every applicant offered similar positions. You may not require one only for persons with disabilities or persons you might think have disabilities. You will need to justify any disqualification based on the results of the medical examinations as job-related and consistent with business necessity.

This is a tricky area and caution is recommended. Additional information can be found in the Legal Requirements section (Section XII) of this Handbook. If you are unsure of any of this information, it is strongly recommended that you seek additional technical assistance.

What do I do if an applicant raises the issue of his or her disability or requests accommodations during the interview?

If accommodations are requested for the interview, you may make sufficient inquiries to enable you to provide the accommodations for the interview. Such accommodations are provided to enable equal opportunity to interview. Accommodations that may be required to perform the essential functions of the service position should not be discussed at this point.

If an applicant has a visible disability or, during or prior to the interview, he or she discloses a disability or a need for accommodation to perform the essential functions of the position, it is not advisable to

Questions?

If you are unsure about questions to ask, you should call:

(1) Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center at 800-949-4232 or www.adata.org or

(2) The Job Accommodation Network at 800-526-7234 or www.jan.wvu.edu

pursue the issue at this point and you cannot consider this in your selection decision. A response might be, "We are an inclusive project that encourages participation by all persons with the skills and abilities to do the job, and we provide needed accommodations."

*Questions You Can Ask and Questions You Cannot Ask***

Questions You Can Ask	Questions You Cannot Ask
General Questions Tell me about yourself. What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses? Tell me about your interests. What do you see yourself doing in 5 years?	**General Questions** Tell me about your disability. Describe any physical or mental problems or disabilities you have. Have you ever received Worker's Compensation, SSDI, or SSI? Are you taking prescribed drugs? Have you ever been hospitalized? How many days were you absent from work for illness last year?
Questions About Performing Essential Functions	**Questions About Performing Essential Functions**
Are you able to perform the essential functions of this position with or without reasonable accommodation? (Note: This question should be answered with a yes or a no response. The applicant is not required to disclose if an accommodation is needed.)	Do you have any disabilities, impair ments, or illnesses which may affect your performance in this position?

**Adapted from World Institute on Disability, Disability Demonstration Project Oakland, CA

Medical Exams

Some programs require a medical examination or drug testing before participants are allowed to serve.

If you require such testing, all applicants must take the test. In other words, you cannot test some applicants and not others. We suggest that you contact your Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC) at 800-949-4232 or www.adata.org; or the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) at 800-526-7234 or www.jan.wvu.edu for more guidance.

Questions You Can Ask	Questions You Cannot Ask
Questions About Specific Duties This position requires traveling from one local school to another. Can you do that? This position involves doing X and Y at Z speed. Can you do X and Y at this speed? This position involves taking informa tion over the phone and entering it into a computer. Can you do that? This position requires moving con struction materials weighing 15 pounds to various parts of a work site. Can you do that? This position requires reading to chil dren. Can you do that?	**Questions About Specific Duties** How do you teach a class when you are Deaf? How can someone with your dis ability drive a truck? How can you manage playground duty when you can't see? How can you clear trails, dig a ditch, pull weeds, or mow lawns with your handicap? What kinds of help will we have to give you so that you can do these tasks?
Questions About Accommodations	**Questions About Accommodations**
If an applicant volunteers that he/she can perform the task with an accom modation, then you may ask: What accommodation will you need to perform this task? However, please note the advisory paragraph above against asking this questions.	To do this job you will obviously need accommodations. Which ones will you need?

Access

What is accessibility?

What are the five areas of accessibility?

How can I measure my current environment and progress toward accessibility?

What resources are available to assist me in evaluating my level of accessibility?

Section VI: Access

Key Words and Terms

Access
Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)
Accommodations
Alternate Formats
Architectural Access
Augmentative Communication Devices
Barrier-Free Design
Communication Access
Disability Business and Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs)
Inaccessible
Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
Program Access
Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act
Temporary Barriers

What is accessibility?

When most people hear the word "accessibility" they think of ramps, automatic doors, and elevators. While these provide some access, accessibility refers to **all** the features that make an environment accessible. Moreover, in most cases, accessible design is good design. Not only are accessibility standards designed to assist and benefit persons with a wide range of disabilities, including hearing loss, cognition, and visual impairments, but accessible design benefits everyone. Ramps make it easier for senior citizens, persons with children, and delivery persons to enter buildings. Wider doors and levered handles make it easier for everyone to negotiate doorways. Signage requirements make it easier for everyone to see and understand signs.

What are the five areas of accessibility?

The term "access" or "accessibility" encompasses five different areas: architectural, programmatic, technology, communication, and alternate formats. All five areas are discussed in this section. Accessibility in all

five areas is critical to achieving inclusion.

While it may not always be possible to achieve complete accessibility, a truly inclusive environment continuously strives to increase its level of accessibility.

Architectural Access

Architectural accessibility refers to the "built" environment and the means of getting to and from that built environment, whether it is from a parking lot, a bus stop, or the street. The lack of architectural access affects many people with different kinds of disabilities. We can easily imagine how a flight of steps would impact someone with a mobility impairment, but a truly architecturally accessible building considers the needs of persons with a range of disabilities, including visual, mobility, hearing, and cognitive impairments. Sometimes, an architecturally accessible environment is referred to as "barrier-free."

TIP
Be watchful of naturally occurring barriers. For example, low, overhanging tree limbs can grow across sidewalks, and sidewalks can "buckle," creating hazards and barriers.

Over the past 30 years, the level of architectural access in many communities has increased tremendously; virtually all new buildings are required to be accessible to individuals with a range of disabilities. In many cases renovation or alteration of buildings triggers accessibility requirements. In general, the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) are the most appropriate standard to use to achieve architectural accessibility. Additional information on the ADAAG and other architectural standards can be found in Appendix D of this Handbook.

Barrier removal need not be expensive, and there are often many ways to remove barriers or increase accessibility creatively and inexpensively. There are, however, times when buildings are old, and retrofitting to remove barriers is an undue financial burden for your organization; in

Example:
Access and accommodation
"Access" and "accommodation" are sometimes used interchangeably. Access means that conditions exist so that a wide range of persons with disabilities can access a building, a program, or an activity. Accommodations are a part of access. They are the specific services, equipment, or changes in policy, procedures, or the built environment that allow an individual with a disability to participate in activities.

Example:
Accessible routes are to be stable, firm, slip-resistant, 36-inches wide, with no objects protruding that someone cannot detect with a cane.

Example:
Door handles — outside, indoor, restroom stalls — should be fully operable with a closed fist. The same is true for water faucets.

these cases retrofitting is not required. (See the Legal Requirements (Section XII) of this Handbook for more discussion of this subject.)

An inclusive service program will still provide as meaningful an equivalent access as possible. In many cases, this means changing an activity so that all persons can participate. Service projects are a great way to increase accessibility and to heighten awareness about disability. The resources listed at the end of this chapter can also provide assistance to you in discovering inexpensive ways to remove barriers and increase program access.

Programmatic Access

Separate and apart from architectural access issues, your program's eligibility requirements, policies, or operating procedures may be causing additional programmatic barriers to full and meaningful access.

For example, do you require your participants to have a driver's license so they can drive from school to school because the service position requires tutoring students in different locations? Is driving the essential function or is it the ability to get from location to location? Do you require your participants who do computerized research as an essential function to serve from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM? This requirement could be a barrier to a person whose medication makes it difficult to get up in the morning or to someone whose accessible transportation is unpredictable or only available at specific hours.

Flexibility, wherever possible, is the key. Think creatively.

Travel and Participants with Disabilities

Travel for people with disabilities can sometimes be challenging for both you and the individual with a disability. Careful planning and good questions will contribute to a successful experience. Be certain that airlines are notified in advance about special needs, and that hotel

Resource:

The most up-to-date version of ADAAG can be found at www.access-board.gov

Example:

Be watchful of creating transient or temporary barriers. These are barriers you create with furniture, boxes, or plants placed in the path of travel and preventing access.

Example:

Programmatic Access

George, an applicant who uses a wheelchair, cannot get into the Foster Grandparents' office because it is in an older building that has three steps at the entrance. The program manager relocates the interview to a meeting room at a local school site that is accessible and ensures George's subsequent service site is fully accessible to him.

and meeting spaces are accessible. Also, know that some participants with disabilities are not experienced travelers and may not be aware of barriers that they may encounter while traveling. Advise participants to call a DBTAC or Independent Living Center for suggestions for a good travel experience.

Example:
Programmatic Access
A weekly meeting for a Learn and Serve program is held in a classroom next to a gym. When volleyball season starts, it is very noisy. The program relocates the meeting so that Marcia, a participant with a hearing loss, can fully take part.

Technology Access

Technology has become an extremely valuable way to increase inclusion for people with a range of disabilities. In some cases technology is specifically designed for use by people with disabilities. Augmentative communication devices, wheelchairs, and screen readers which "speak" what is on the computer screen are all examples of personal technology used by individuals with disabilities to increase accessibility and inclusion. Remember that technology access is not always complex electronic devices, it can be as simple as a rubber pen grip.

In other cases, accessibility is built into the technology that everyone uses. Computers, websites, telephone systems, and televisions all are increasingly accessible to and useable by people with a range of disabilities, including visual, hearing, mobility, and cognitive disabilities. Such technology is often referred to as "universal design" because it can be used by everyone regardless of their ability or disability. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act is a recently strengthened federal requirement to ensure technology access in federal agencies. For more information on Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act go to www.section508.gov.

Examples of Universal Technology Access

- Adjustable Work Stations
- Hearing Aid Compatible Telephones
- Caller ID
- Captioned Videos, Television Shows, and Televised Public Service Announcements
- Capacity to Use Larger Fonts
- Tape Recorder

Don't assume that everyone with hearing loss uses American Sign Language (ASL).

For persons who do use sign language, you may need to provide interpreter services.

Website Accessibility

It is important to consider accessibility in your website. Remember, any audio information should also be written. "Alt tabs" which describe graphics make websites accessible to persons using screen readers. Good information on how to incorporate accessibility features on your website can be found at www.cast.org.

Communication Access

For persons with hearing, speech, cognitive, or learning disabilities, you may also have to provide communication access. Communication access means providing the technology or services necessary to facilitate equivalent communication. In these cases, the focus is on providing an equivalent experience and on ensuring that information is provided effectively. This sometimes requires some thought and discussion about the situation.

TIP
For persons with cognitive or learning disabilities, you may need to provide information in a different form, or to provide assistance in understanding that material.

Examples of Communication Access

- Writing Notes
- Assistive Listening Devices
- Interpreters
- Real-time Captioning
- Taped Information

TIP
When preparing video materials, captioning provides access to persons with hearing loss. In the same way, using voice-overs when there are images or music allows persons who are visually impaired to experience the video.

Alternate Formats

For people with visual impairments, written material needs to be provided in alternate formats. There is a wide range of alternate formats, including Braille, text file, large print, and audiotape. You should provide the format requested in a timely manner. An inclusive program will provide information in alternate formats at the same time that it provides any written information.

Examples of Alternate Formats

- To make large print documents, ask what point font is preferred and reprint using larger font.
- To make a document accessible to a computer screen reader, save it as a text file, then attach as e-mail or copy to a disk.

TIP
Be sure not to put heavy boxes on top of Brailled documents. The raised dots will be crushed and rendered unusable.

How can I measure my current environment and progress toward accessibility?

It is important for programs to continually evaluate the level of accessibility in their program offices, sites, and activities. There are several good checklists that can help you determine your current level of accessibility in all five areas and will provide you guidance in planning strategies to increase your level of accessibility.

TIP
Your Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC) or Independent Living Center can refer you to a local supplier of Brailled documents (see Appendix D of this Handbook for contact information).

What resources are available to assist me in evaluating my level of accessibility?

There are several resources that you can tap to help you evaluate the level of accessibility in your program, as well as to provide communication access and alternate formats. All programs can use the Disability Business and Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs). Many independent living centers can help you do an evaluation of your sites and the level of accessibility. The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) can help you determine sources for accommodations. An example of a short self-evaluation checklist is available in Appendix B of this Handbook. This abbreviated checklist is intended as a method to evaluate some of the most basic elements of accessibility without actually measuring distances, slopes, or forces.

TIP
Many independent living centers can conduct an accessibility evaluation for you. Make sure they know you are a "504 entity."

All programs that receive federal financial assistance are held to the standards found in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. When you call for technical assistance, be sure to let the provider know that you are a "504 entity." Please see the Legal Requirements section (Section XII) of this Handbook for more information.

Contact information for all of these resources can be found in Appendix D of this Handbook.

Accommodations

What are accommodations?

When do I need to provide accommodations?

How do I provide accommodations?

What should I keep in mind about accommodations?

How do I determine whether I can reasonably accommodate a particular person?

Section VII: Accommodations

Key Words and Terms

Accommodations
Assistive Listening Device
Disability Business and Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs)
Essential Functions
Functional Limitations
Inclusive Service Environment
Independent Living Centers (ILC's)
Interpreter
Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
Qualified Individual with a Disability
Real Time Captioning

What are accommodations?

Accommodations refer to all of the technology, services, and changes in policy, procedures, and the built environment that enable individuals with disabilities to perform essential functions or to equally participate in events and programs. The list of potential kinds of accommodations is limited only by creativity An accommodation will vary depending on the individual need, the disability, the program, resources available, and the tasks that need to be completed. Accommodations can be very inexpensive: printing a document in large, clear font, providing written instructions, purchasing a headset for a telephone. Approximately 80% of accommodations cost less than $500 (according to the Job Accommodation Network [JAN], www.jan.wvu.edu). Some accommodations are more expensive: providing interpreter services, installing a mechanical lift or purchasing new software. Accommodations that are part of an accessible environment are generally designed to assist a particular individual.

Types of accommodations

- Removing barriers and increasing accessibility
- Restructuring a service position
- Modifying a service schedule
- Modifying policies or procedures
- Obtaining or modifying equipment or devices
- Reassignment to a vacant position
- Providing services, such as qualified readers, interpreters, or real-time captioning
- Adjusting or modifying training activities, materials, or examinations

Some individuals will need one or two accommodations, and others may need more.

When do I need to provide accommodations?

There are at least two common instances when you will need to provide accommodations. One is for public events and meetings that your program may sponsor, including service activities. In these cases, you should ensure that you provide members of the public an opportunity and a means to request accommodations.

A simple statement goes a long way in communicating to the public that you are striving to create an inclusive environment. It also gives you advance notice of a need for a particular accommodation so that you will have time to ensure that it is in place.

The second instance in which you will need to provide accommodations is when you have a request from a qualified individual with a disability in your program. Here are some important points:

- An inclusive environment does not presume a person requires an accommodation, but creates conditions that are open and allow for effective communication about needs.

- An inclusive service environment creates conditions that give

TIP

Insert in a brochure or flyer: This meeting will be held in a fully accessible location. Should you require other accommodations, please contact (insert your program contact name and number/email).

Example

Accommodations

Jeremy has a visual disability and needed software to "read" text to him. The program purchased the software.

Annette cannot drive and relies on a local transportation service that could not get her to her service site by 9:00 a.m. An adjustment was made to her schedule to accommodate the transportation need.

Zach, who has a hearing loss, has trouble hearing in team meetings. The program borrowed an assistive listening device from the local independent living center.

a qualified individual with a disability the confidence to request the needed accommodation(s) and carefully considers each request.

- An inclusive service environment engages in a dialogue with the individual requester to help determine the appropriate and effective accommodation(s).

- An inclusive service environment provides accommodations with the goal of truly enabling an individual to fully participate and contribute. It approaches the provision of accommodations as one of doing all it can do to ensure access and inclusion, rather than focusing on what "has to happen."

TIP
There is no obligation to provide an accommodation until you are asked.

How do I provide accommodations?

Once an individual requests an accommodation, the process of evaluating your ability to provide that accommodation begins. The first step is to open a dialogue with the individual to find out what functional limitations exist that might prevent the accomplishment of essential functions. In addition, discuss any existing barriers that might prevent or limit participation in the program or activity.

In many cases, individuals will know what they need and how to secure it. In some cases, individuals will not be certain what they will need. This is when technical assistance can be beneficial and cost-effective.

In some cases, the need for an accommodation may not be obvious. Once a request is made, you may, under certain conditions, ask for documentation about the need for an accommodation. This can be a complex area so call upon the range of resources provided in this Handbook for more information and guidance on this issue. See the Legal Requirements section (Section XII) and Appendix D of this Handbook for further information.

What should I keep in mind about accommodations?

- People with disabilities are all very different—some have extensive experience in requesting and using accommodations and others do not. Some will be able to tell you exactly what they will need, others will not. In some cases, this is because an individual will not have extensive experience with accommodations, but more often, it is because the individual does not yet have a full understanding of what they will need. They may know their needs, but not their service environment. For some people with disabilities, the accommodations need-

ed will vary depending on the specific circumstances of the activity or program.

- Individuals who are requesting accommodations also want their service experience to be successful and rewarding but they may have had difficulties or negative experiences in securing accommodations in the past. Remember, that as a program director or supervisor, you are in a position of authority, and you have the ability to create a positive or negative experience. If you approach requests for accommodations from the perspective of creating an inclusive environment and of maintaining open communication, the results will be much more positive. Openness and creativity are important when working with a participant with a disability in determining appropriate and effective accommodations.

- A service term is often limited. If it takes as long as six months to put accommodations into place, the service term is well underway, and everyone becomes frustrated. The more inclusive and open the environment, the more likely it will be that someone will request accommodations early in their service term, and the sooner you can provide the accommodation.

TIP
Retaining participants: Be aware that people may ask for accommodations without using the word "accommodation." For example, a new service participant, who uses a wheelchair, informs his supervisor that the wheelchair cannot fit under the desk in his office. This is a request for an accommodation.

- Discussions about accommodations must remain as confidential as possible. While sometimes it is impossible for the accommodations themselves to be "invisible," it is not necessary for the provision of accommodations to become a program-wide discussion or debate.

How do I determine whether I can reasonably accommodate a particular person?

There may be times when someone requests an accommodation that you feel is too expensive, unwieldy, or impacts your program's ability to meet its mission. Under these circumstances, it is always a good idea to contact technical assistance resources for guidance. There may be options neither you nor the participant thought about that might fully accommodate the person's functional limitations and allow him or her to perform the essential functions of the position – and do so less

expensively, more efficiently, or more effectively. Technical assistance resources include:

- The National Service Inclusion Project (NSIP) of the Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts/Boston is the organization funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service to provide its grantees with training and technical assistance in the area of disability inclusion. NSIP can be reached at 1-888-491-0326 or paula.sotnik@umb.edu.

- The Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs) are a federally funded resource that can assist you. They can be reached at 1-800-949-4232 (voice/TTY) or www.adata.org.

- The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is another excellent resource that is available to you at no cost. JAN can be reached at 1-800-526-7234 (voice/TTY) or www.jan.wvu.edu.

- Independent Living Centers (ILCs) are federally funded and located across the country and can provide you with assistance. You may find your closest ILC at www.ilru.org.

It is important to maintain confidentiality about accommodations to the greatest extent possible.

Keep in mind that you are legally required to provide an effective accommodation, unless you can prove that doing so is an undue financial or administrative burden to your program. Simply because the accommodation may be difficult to achieve, time-consuming, or costly does not necessarily qualify as "an undue financial or administrative burden." Please see Section XII: Legal Requirements of this Handbook for further discussion on this topic.

Management and Retention

Are there different strategies or approaches for managing people with disabilities?

What performance expectations should I have of persons with disabilities?

What conduct expectations should I have of persons with disabilities?

What if I am taking disciplinary action and the participant raises the issue of disability?

When can I ask disability-related questions or require documentation of a disability?

How can I effectively retain participants with disabilities?

How do I identify a potential retention problem?

Section VIII: Management and Retention

Key Words and Terms

Accommodations
Disability Business and Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs)
Inclusive Service Environment
Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
Reasonable Documentation
Self-Disclose

Are there different strategies or approaches for managing people with disabilities?

No. Managing persons with disabilities in an inclusive service environment is the same as managing effectively in any environment. People with disabilities, like any other participants, have valuable talents, skills, time, and enthusiasm to contribute to the betterment of their communities. Given inclusive environments and accommodations, those contributions will shine through.

Management Tasks	Participants without Disabilities	Participants with Disabilities
Develop Expectations	X	X
Write Service Description	X	X
Provide Training	X	X
Implement Policies and Procedures	X	X
Support	X	X
Participant Development	X	X
Evaluation	X	X

What performance expectations should I have of persons with disabilities?

Managers and supervisors should take care to ensure that they have the same performance expectations of their participants with disabilities as they do of all their participants. If you expect your participants to participate in days of service, expect the same of participants with disabilities. If you expect paperwork or other tasks to be completed, all of your participants should complete those tasks. Having the same expectations of all participants is a key contributing factor to an inclusive service environment.

By the same token, however, take care not to have greater expectations of persons with disabilities. Some media portrayals of persons with disabilities reflect unrealistic images of always optimistic, eager, non-frustrated people. People with disabilities face the same issues, frustrations, and bad days as anyone else.

In some cases, poor performance may warrant verbal warnings or disciplinary action. If the participant that you are disciplining has a disability that should not affect your approach to discipline. People with disabilities are as accountable as anyone else.

What conduct expectations should I have of persons with disabilities?

Managers and supervisors should take care to ensure that they hold their participants with disabilities to the same standards of conduct as they expect of all their participants. If you expect your participants to arrive on time, have that same expectation of participants with disabilities. Even if you have adjusted hours as an accommodation, expect them to arrive at their adjusted arrival time. If you expect your participants to not be impaired by alcohol or illegal substances during service hours, have that same expectation of participants with disabilities. Even though addictions to legal substances are protected disabilities,

they are not an excuse for violations of your rules of conduct.

There are some disabilities that can impact an individual's ability to interact with others, to control emotions, or to judge social and work situations appropriately. Inappropriate behavior, however, is not a disability. If an individual has disclosed a disability that may result in inappropriate behavior, you should discuss accommodations and strategies for ensuring that any behavior is not disruptive to your program. Each situation needs to be dealt with on its own. If a person has not disclosed such a disability, you would handle this behavioral issue as you would with any other participant.

What if I am taking disciplinary action and the participant raises the issue of disability?

In rare instances, an individual who is receiving disciplinary action as a result of poor performance or misconduct may reveal a disability only when he/she realizes that their disability is impacting their success in the program. You should consider opening the process of providing effective accommodations at this point. If you make an accommodation, you should give ample time to determine if the accommodation is successful and if the participant's performance or conduct has improved.

When in doubt, call your Training and Technical Assistance Provider, the National Service Inclusion Project (NSIP) of the University of Massachusetts/Boston, or other resources listed in Appendix D of this Handbook.

When can I ask disability-related questions or require documentation of a disability?

There may be times when a participant requests accommodations but you are unclear about his or her functional limitations. There may be other times when you observe performance problems and you have

reason to believe that a participant's ability to perform essential service functions is impaired by a medical condition. Or you believe that what appears to be a participant's medical problem could pose a direct threat to the health or safety of himself or others. In these instances, you may ask the participant limited disability-related questions or request a limited amount of reasonable documentation about the nature of the disability and its functional limitations as it relates to the essential functions of the position. There is further discussion in the Legal Requirements section, (Section XII) of this Handbook, that explains when disability-related questions and requests for medical information can be made and sets forth the parameters of these inquiries. This can be a complex area and it is sometimes hard to see the issues clearly. Do not hesitate to call upon the technical assistance resources available to you such as the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), your Disability Business and Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC), or the Corporation for National and Community Service's Training and Technical Assistance provider, the National Service Inclusion Project (NSIP). Other resources include:

- EEOC's Enforcement Guidance: Disability-Related Inquiries and Medical Examinations of Employees Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (July 2000), available at www.eeoc.gov.

- EEOC's Enforcement Guidance: Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (March 1999), available at www.eeoc.gov.

How can I effectively retain participants with disabilities?

Retaining participants is a challenge for programs regardless of whether the participant has a disability or not. Effective retention not only requires that participants are satisfied and rewarded, but also that their experience is positive and there is a sense of excitement and fun. Many of the strategies and principles of retention for any participant are true for participants with disabilities. Rather than consider retention of participants with disabilities as a separate and discrete issue,

consider possible issues in the same context as any other. Creativity, flexibility, and a willingness to negotiate responsibly will benefit you, your program, and participants with and without disabilities.

For participants with disabilities, an inclusive service environment, effective accommodations, and open communication are critical to retention. There are some strategies that you can undertake to ensure that participants with disabilities are successful in your program and are able to successfully complete their term of service.

To ensure retention of participants with disabilities:

- Create and maintain a truly inclusive service environment
- Hold participants with disabilities to the same levels of accountability as other participants
- Develop clear expectations and hold participants to these expectations
- Keep the lines of communication clear and open
- Develop clear position descriptions that outline tasks, essential functions, and expectations
- Take action when you see that a participant is not participating

For those issues that may arise that are specific to disability, e.g., the provision of accommodations and truly including an individual with a disability in service, you may need to approach situations with creativity. Relationships that you develop with disability providers, Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs), or key disability leaders in your community can be invaluable in assisting you in this area.

How do I identify a potential retention problem?

As you think about specific issues regarding retention, be sure to evaluate the issue at hand to determine whether it is a retention issue specific to disability, or whether the participant is facing issues not at all related to disability. This is an important first step because it will help clearly identify the issues that are at hand.

Participants are *more* likely to complete their service assignments when the following exists:	**Participants are *less* likely to complete their service assignments when the following exist:**
They perceive that what they are doing is valuable	They perceive they are given "make work" assignments
They receive appropriate equipment and support	There is a lack of appropriate accommodations or inconsistent or unreliable accommodations.
There is a feeling of belonging	There is a failure to recognize the importance of participation; saying "Just sit this one out."
There are opportunities for personal growth	Assignments are "dead-ends"
Mutual expectations are met	They perceive a lack of effective and open communication
They are being treated as part of a team	They feel that they are being ignored
They are being challenged	There is unwarranted praise that can be perceived as insincere

Collaborations

What are the benefits of collaboration for national and community service programs with disability organizations?

Where do I begin?

How are disability organizations structured?

Section IX: Collaborations

Key Words and Terms
National Disability Organizations

What are the benefits of collaboration for national and community service programs with disability organizations?

Collaboration allows organizations to achieve more together than they would be able to achieve alone. Often organizations have mutual or complementary goals. Organizations that provide services to people with disabilities, or advocate for people with disabilities, are found in every community. Strong and effective collaborations with these organizations can contribute to your success in creating an inclusive service environment, recruitment, retention, ensuring compliance with federal and state laws, and providing accommodations.

A list of potential benefits for disability organizations and service programs

Benefits	Benefits to Disability Organizations	Benefits to National and Community Service Programs
Outreach/Placement	Create opportunities for consumers	Identify potential participants with disabilities
Recruitment	Educate consumers to possibilities	Recruit qualified committed participants
Accommodations	Allow consumers the opportunity to fully participate in service and gain valuable experience	Retention of participants with disabilities
Networking	Learn about national service	Develop relationships with disability organizations
Community Awareness	Joint projects	Joint projects

For disability organizations, collaborations with national and community service programs will provide new opportunities for people with disabilities and open up supportive environments for personal growth.

There are many areas in which disability organizations can help service programs succeed in their efforts to include people with disabilities and to create inclusive service environments. They can provide technical assistance on accessibility and accommodations, assist you in recruitment (through newsletters, brochures, and individual referrals), and assist when issues arise around retention.

The world of service, and the opportunities offered, can also help disability organizations. Service experience can provide great opportunities for individuals with disabilities. These individuals can then help to change perceptions that people with disabilities are always recipients of service, not service providers. Especially on a local level, the service community is unfamiliar with the disability community, and vice versa.

Where do I begin?

The most successful collaborations are built on knowledge, trust, and relationships that are mutually beneficial. It is important for you to become familiar with the organizations in your community and for them to become familiar with your programs and with the goals of service.

Some ways to start collaborations:

- Set up short, informal meetings with the leadership of local disability organizations. Be prepared to explain your program and the goals of national and community service.
- Invite staff and consumers of disability organizations to service events and meetings and make certain those meetings are accessible!
- Coordinate a service-day project with a disability organization to either benefit the organization or its consumers.

- Invite disability organizations to conduct disability awareness training for your staff and participants.
- Join the board or advisory committee of a disability organization.
- Write articles about your program for newsletters.
- Link your website to theirs.
- Many organizations have state- or county-level conferences and meetings. Present a workshop or exhibit at a booth.

How are disability organizations structured?

In order to enhance the possibility of good collaboration, it is helpful to understand how disability organizations are set up. There are three basic ways that disability organizations are organized:

- The vast majority are private, non-profit organizations, though there are some government agencies (such as vocational rehabilitation offices and state/county offices for people with disabilities). There are also many private, for-profit organizations and service providers.
- Disability organizations can also be divided into two other broad categories — those that provide services to or for people with disabilities, and those that are advocacy organizations that are controlled and staffed by people with disabilities. Most often, the latter groups focus on systems change and increased access and services for people with disabilities. Most independent living centers are controlled by persons with disabilities and are, for the most part, staffed by persons with disabilities. Organizations such as UCP, Arc, and Easter Seals provide direct services to people with disabilities.
- Some disability organizations are cross-disability and serve a wide range of disabilities. Others are more specific and focus on particular types of disabilities. Independent living centers are cross-disability. UCP affiliates serve a range of people with disabilities but tend to focus on persons with physical and cognitive impairments. The National Association of the Deaf (NAD) focuses on persons who are culturally Deaf. The American Federation of the Blind focuses on persons with visual impairments.

Many disability organizations are affiliates or chapters of national organizations. The state or local organization may be very large or very small. There are also local organizations that provide services that are not necessarily affiliated with a national organization. Please see Appendix D for contact information for national organizations. They can assist you in locating the closest local organizations.

Progress Towards Inclusion

How do I know my efforts toward creating an inclusive environment have been successful?

What are some ways I can evaluate my progress?

Section X: Progress Toward Inclusion

Key Words and Terms
Accessibility Survey
Inclusive Service Environment
Interpreter
Relay Service
TTY/TDD

How do I know my efforts toward creating an inclusive environment have been successful?

The successful creation of an inclusive service environment is sometimes difficult to evaluate since it is not easily quantified. Moreover, just because your program might have a number of participants with disabilities, it is not necessarily inclusive. This section contains suggested indicators for you to use in developing an evaluation plan around inclusion.

What are some ways I can evaluate my progress?

Ask yourself, your program, and your participants — with and without disabilities — and your disability partners:

Environment: Spirit of Inclusion

- Are participants with disabilities full participants in the program and service activities?
- Are they treated as peers?
- Are the expectations for participants with disabilities the same as for other participants?
- Are service descriptions clear in outlining the essential functions?
- Are events planned with accessibility and accommodations considered?
- Are there opportunities for advancement for individuals with disabilities?
- Are individuals with disabilities found at all levels of the organization, including the management and board?

Environment: Architectural

- Is an accessibility survey conducted at least annually?
- Is there an action plan to remove barriers in place? Is it considered whenever plans are made to change locations, renovate, or reorganize space?
- Do all service sites also conduct accessibility surveys on an annual basis?
- Do all events, including retreats, trainings, and celebrations take place in barrier-free locations?

Environment: Communication

- Are accommodations to ensure communication access provided?
- Do program staff know how and where to secure interpreters, assistive listening devices, or real-time captioning?
- Are staff and participants comfortable with Relay calls?
- Do staff and participants know how to use TTY/TDDs?
- Is training in basic American Sign Language (ASL) provided for staff and participants when appropriate?
- If appropriate, is there someone on your staff who knows basic American Sign Language (ASL)?

Environment: Alternate Formats

- Are all staff and participants familiar with the different kinds of alternate formats?
- Do staff know how to provide documents in alternate formats?
- Do staff know how to get documents printed in Braille when requested?
- Are all staff and participants familiar with the program's procedures to handle requests for accommodations?

Environment: Requests and Modifications of Policies, Procedures, and Practices

- Are staff and participants familiar with your ability to handle requests for accommodations and modifications of policies, procedures, and practices?
- Are decisions about whether or not to honor requests made at a management level?
- Are decisions made in a short timeframe, in a matter of days, not weeks or months?
- Are participants with disabilities actively engaged in a discussion about their needs for accommodations?

Administration and Management

- Is all information related to an individual's disability (including medical records and accommodations) confidential and kept in a secure file separate from all other records?
- When interviewing, are the same questions asked of all applicants?
- Is regular training on disability awareness and sensitivity provided?
- Is regular training on Equal Opportunity Employment policy provided?

Collateral Material (brochures, flyers, applications, and websites)

- Are there images of persons with disabilities in brochures and other materials, including your website?
- Is your website accessible to persons with disabilities?
- Is disability included in your statement of non-discrimination?
- Are there clear instructions on how to request accommodations?
- Are materials routinely available in alternate formats?
- Are individuals from the disability community asked to review your materials?
- Have you implemented policies that allow applications to be completed and submitted in different ways, such as online?

Recruitment

- Do you track the number of questions you receive regarding the inclusion of persons with disabilities in your program?
- Do you ask applicants to voluntarily self-disclose a disability on your application form? Is this information immediately separated and filed separately upon receipt of the application and used solely for statistical purposes?
- Do you track the percentage or number (not the name) of applicants who voluntarily self-disclose disability?
- Do you track the number of national, state, and local referral networks or sources you contact to reach applicants with disabilities?
- Do you track the number of participants with disabilities in your program that you can directly relate to your outreach efforts? (Remember this information must be self-disclosed, and you must ensure the confidentiality of all information relating to an individual's disability.)

Accommodations

- Do you track the number of requests that you receive for accommodations?

- Do you track the number of individuals making such requests?
- Do you track the satisfaction of participants with disabilities who receive accommodations?
- Do you measure the satisfaction of participants with disabilities with their service experience?
- Do you track the number and cost of formal requests that you receive for accommodations?
- Do you track the number of participants with disabilities who successfully complete service?
- Do you track the number of participants who do not complete service? Do you then evaluate their reasons for non-completion?
- Do you evaluate the satisfaction of participants with the program and with the level of inclusion that they experienced?

Collaboration

- Have you developed relationships with disability organizations for the purposes of recruitment, technical assistance, or training?
- Have you asked leaders with disabilities in your community to assist you in evaluation efforts?
- Do you conduct service activities in conjunction with disability organizations?
- Can you identify areas of collaboration with a range of organizations?

Government Benefits and Participation in Service Programs

What government benefits do people with disabilities often receive?

Can participating in service jeopardize an individual's eligibility for government benefits?

How can I prevent this?

Section XI: Government Benefits and Participation in Service Programs

Key Words and Terms
Medicaid
Medicare
Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

What government benefits do people with disabilities often receive?

Many persons with disabilities receive government benefits, sometimes on the basis of their income eligibility, sometimes on the basis of their disability, and sometimes on the basis of both. The Social Security Administration (SSA) administers Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). For some, SSI and SSDI are a sole source of income and provide access to Medicaid and Medicare, crucial sources of health care and services. In addition, a range of other federal, state, and local benefit programs provide housing assistance, transportation, and other services. Often, these government benefits are critical to the ability of a person with a disability to remain self-sufficient.

Can participating in service jeopardize an individual's eligibility for government benefits?

Depending on the type of service program and the type of government benefits, there may be a risk that participating in a service program might jeopardize an individual's eligibility for government benefits. An effective and inclusive program manager will be aware of these concerns and will be able to direct individuals to appropriate resources for assistance. *Most often, only full-time AmeriCorps participants will be impacted.*

"Income Disregard" Rules

At the time of this printing, the legislation that authorizes the programs of the Corporation for National and Community Service is being reviewed for reauthorization. The following text provides the current, general framework of how participation in a service program might affect an individual's eligibility for government benefits, with some specific guidance about SSI and SSDI. Any changes due to reauthorization will be noted on the Corporation for National and Community Service website: www.nationalservice.org.

Based on the "income disregard" rule in the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA), participation in AmeriCorps* VISTA or Senior Corps projects should not affect an individual's eligibility for any government assistance program. For more detailed information about this rule, go to: www.americorps.org/resources/memo.html. Participation in Learn and Serve America activities also should have no effect on an individual's eligibility for any government assistance program.

Because the "income disregard" rule in the current National Community Service Act is narrower than the DVSA rules, other AmeriCorps participants (including AmeriCorps, Tribe, Territory, Education Award, Promise Fellow, and National Civilian Community Corps) who receive government benefits need to proceed with caution. Participant benefits in AmeriCorps may not affect an individual's eligibility for the following benefits:

- Food Stamps
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- HUD-subsidized housing
- Veterans' benefits
- Any other need-based Federal or federally assisted program (except a program supported under the Social Security Act or Federal student financial aid)

However, participant benefits in AmeriCorps State/National programs may affect an individual's eligibility for the following benefits:

- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Security Income for the Aged, Blind, and Disabled (SSI)
- Social Security Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI)
- Medicaid and Medicare
- State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Title 20 Social Services
- Unemployment Insurance
- Need-based Federal Student Financial Aid

SSI and SSDI and AmeriCorps State/National

There are several potential areas of concern for individuals who receive SSI or SSDI and serve in AmeriCorps State/National.

First, eligibility for both SSI and SSDI is based on a finding that an individual is disabled. In several cases, the Social Security Administration (SSA) determined that an individual who was participating in AmeriCorps State/National was engaged in "substantial gainful activity" and therefore was no longer disabled. SSI and SSDI recipients need to be aware of this risk and that they may decrease this risk by taking advantage of SSA work incentives and income exclusions.

You can advise applicants who receive SSI/SSDI to talk to their local Social Security Office or seek assistance from the local independent living center.

Second, SSI recipients serving in AmeriCorps State/National need to be aware that SSA considers the living allowance to be "earned income." This may result in a decrease in monthly SSI benefits, which are based on an individual's countable income. SSI recipients can lessen the reduction (and increase their total income) by taking advantage of SSA's work incentive options.

Even if an AmeriCorps member declines the living allowance, she/he should still consult with the Social Security Office. In some cases, the Social Security Administration (SSA) will consider the living allowance potential income.

SSA recently made two policy changes for SSI recipients who participate in AmeriCorps State/National. First, SSA extended the Student Child Earned Income Exclusion to AmeriCorps participants under the age of 22 who are neither married nor the head of household. Second, it excluded from countable income the AmeriCorps education award

to the extent that it is used for paying tuition, fees, and other necessary educational expenses. To learn more about these SSI policy changes, go to: www.ssa.gov and view SSA Disability Notes No. 28.

SSA has also developed cooperative agreements with state and local organizations to provide assistance and counseling on benefits for persons with disabilities. These organizations can be a valuable resource for your program and for persons with disabilities who have questions about the potential impact of serving. For more information go to www.ssa.org.

How can I help prevent this?

Knowing that the impact of service on eligibility for government benefits is a real concern, program managers can take the following steps to increase participation, alleviate concerns, and ensure retention of individuals with disabilities in service programs:

- Inform all applicants and participants that guidance is available regarding the relationship between participation and eligibility for government benefits.
- Encourage participants to notify the government benefits agency (e.g., Social Security Administration) that they will be participating in service to identify any potential problems as well as ways to address those problems.
- Emphasize the availability of work incentives and other policies that might lessen any adverse impact on SSI or SSDI benefits.
- Develop working relationships with local Social Security offices and with local organizations to raise the level of awareness among all involved about ways to ensure that participation in national service will not result in a loss or reduction in disability benefits.

Legal Requirements

What laws govern national service programs on the inclusion of people with disabilities?

What is Section 504?

Are there other federal statutes I need to be aware of?

Are there other legal requirements I should be aware of?

Section XII: Legal Requirements

Key Words and Terms
Direct Threat
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Federal Statutes

What laws govern national and community service programs on the inclusion of people with disabilities?

Civil rights laws affect almost every area of American life and require that equal opportunity be provided. In terms of persons with disabilities, several federal laws ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination. National service programs are obligated under federal law to ensure non-discriminatory environments and practices and procedures for qualified persons with disabilities. In most cases, if a program is truly open to the full inclusion of persons with disabilities and to the creation of a respectful and inclusive service environment, that program is likely to be in legal compliance.

This section is intended to provide you with a brief overview of key areas of the federal laws that apply to service programs. More in-depth and specific information can be found by contacting the resource organizations listed, as well as the Corporation for National and Community Service Training and Technical Assistance provider on disability issues. There are two federal disability laws that are specifically relevant to national and community service programs: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

What is Section 504?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that "[n]o otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall,

solely by reason of [her or] his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . ."

Section 504 applies to any entity that receives federal assistance, including grant funds, services of federally sponsored participants, or federally subsidized training. While some entities, such as tribal governments or religious organizations, may be specifically exempted from certain federal nondiscrimination requirements, Section 504 does not include any such exemptions. The bottom line is that any entity that applies for and receives assistance from the Corporation must certify that it will comply with Section 504.

Programs and activities covered by Section 504 must be accessible to persons with disabilities, and recipients must provide reasonable accommodations to allow a qualified person with a disability to receive services, participate in the entities' programs, or perform the essential function of a position. Section 504 does not require grantees to take any action that would result in a "fundamental alteration" in the nature of a program or activity or that would cause an "undue financial or administrative burden."

The Corporation has published regulations at 45 CFR Part 1232 specific to Section 504 requirements for entities that receive Corporation assistance. You should familiarize yourself with these rules, which include provisions on the selection and supervision of employees and service participants, reasonable accommodation, and program accessibility (regulations are available at www.nationalservice.org.)

Under Section 504 and Corporation regulations, there are two different standards for making your facilities accessible to individuals with disabilities. For older facilities (existing as of May 30, 1979), a grantee is not required to make structural changes if other methods may achieve compliance and "when viewed in its entirety" the program or activity is readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities.

Facilities constructed or altered for the use of any grantee after May 30, 1979, must be readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities. For these newer facilities, the more flexible "when viewed in its entirety" standard does not apply. This can be complex and sometimes difficult to determine. If you are unsure of which standard to use, please refer to the resources provided in this Handbook.

Are there other federal statutes I need to be aware of?

Both national service laws, the National and Community Service Act (NCSA) and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA), prohibit an individual with responsibility for the operation of a grantee's projects from discriminating on the basis of a disability against a qualified individual with a disability who is a participant or staff member.

The Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA, is perhaps the most well known federal statute that extends civil rights protections to persons with disabilities. The ADA, enacted in 1990, prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications. While an entity that receives Corporation assistance may be subject to the ADA, compliance with the ADA is not a condition of receiving assistance from the Corporation. This Handbook focuses on the requirements under Section 504, which generally are stricter than requirements under the ADA.

Are there other legal requirements I should be aware of?

State and Local Laws

Many states and localities have enacted laws that include additional requirements related to the inclusion of persons with disabilities. You should check with state and local government agencies to learn about other requirements.

Exclusions

There are some specific conditions that are specifically excluded from

coverage under Section 504. These are: transvestism, transsexualism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism, gender identity disorders not resulting from physical impairments, other sexual behavior disorders, compulsive gambling, kleptomania, pyromania, and psychoactive substance use disorders resulting from the current illegal use of drugs. The phrase physical or mental impairment does not include homosexuality or bisexuality; these are not considered disabilities.

Temporary Disabilities

Many people experience temporary disabilities, such as a broken arm, a sprained ankle or severe seasonal allergies. They are not protected under Section 504 or the Americans with Disabilities Act. If a program is truly inclusive, however, it will be natural to accommodate persons with temporary disabilities, although not required by law.

"Direct Threat"

In some cases, supervisors may be concerned that an individual with a disability may pose a "direct threat" to themselves or others because of their disability. In order to ensure compliance with the law, these cases must always be approached with caution.

"Direct threat" means a significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of the individual or others that cannot be eliminated or reduced by reasonable accommodation. Any determination of "direct threat" to health or safety must be based on individualized assessment of the individual's present ability to safely perform the essential functions of the position. In determining whether an individual would pose a "direct threat," the factors the program must consider include:

- The duration of the risk;
- The nature and severity of the potential harm;
- The imminence of the potential harm.

The risk must be evaluated and based on reasonable medical judgment that relies on the most current medical knowledge and/or on the

Direct Threat

It is strongly recommended that you always call the Training and Technical Assistance Provider or the resources listed in this Handbook when faced with this kind of situation.

best available objective evidence. Prior to excluding an individual, a clear determination must be made that the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced to a level below that of "direct threat" by the provision of reasonable accommodations.

Drug Use

A person who is addicted to drugs is sometimes protected under Section 504 because addiction sometimes results in a substantial limitation of major life activities. A person who has a past history of addiction to illegal substances who is successfully participating in a drug rehabilitation program is protected, as is a person perceived to have a drug addiction. However, an individual who is currently using illegal substances is not protected under the statutes. This includes persons currently using illegal substances (e.g., using heroine, cocaine, methamphetamine, or marijuana) as well as persons currently illegally using legal substances (e.g., use of someone else's prescription drug, underage use of alcohol, or sniffing glue, cleaners, or solvents to "get high").

Undue Financial or Administrative Burden

In a few cases, you may receive requests for accommodations that you believe are unduly disruptive to your program or are too expensive. Under Section 504 and the terms of your grant or agreement with the Corporation for National and Community Service, you must provide accommodation upon request by a qualified individual with a disability, unless doing so is an undue financial or administrative burden to your program. This is a very high standard. Not being easily achievable does not meet this standard. Being difficult to achieve, time-consuming, or costly, does not meet this standard.

In determining undue financial burden, the resources of your entire organization are considered, not just those of your service program. The factors to be considered are:

Example

Undue Administrative Burden:

Extending a term of service for an AmeriCorps*State/National participant beyond 12 months to allow him or her to complete the required number of service hours. (Note, you may suspend service for a period of time and add this suspension time to the end of the original service term if, for example, a participant is unable to serve due to a medical condition for an extended period.)

- The overall size of your program with respect to number of employees or service participants, and number and type of facilities, and size of your budget.
- The type of operation you have, including the composition and structure of your workforce or service participants, and
- The nature and cost of the accommodation needed.

Policy and procedure changes that violate the provisions of the National and Community Service Act or the Domestic Volunteer Service Act are always an undue administrative burden. Changes, policy changes and changes to handbook provisions are not undue administrative burdens. In other words, you can change your policies but you can never change the legal statutes to make an accommodation.

Disability-Related Inquiries, Medical Examinations, and Requests for Medical Information or Documentation

Specific rules govern making disability-related inquiries or requesting medical documentation or information. Not all health-related inquiries or questions are considered "disability-related." Only those questions that are likely to elicit the disclosure of a disability are disability-related.

Disability-related inquiry" includes questions like:

- "Do you have (or ever had) a disability?" or "What impairments do you have?"
- "Please provide me medical documentation" (unless in context of a reasonable accommodation request by the employee)
- "How did you become disabled?" or "Have you ever been on workers' compensation?"
- "Tell me what prescription drugs or medications you're taking, and what have you taken in the past?"

"Disability-related inquiries" also include actions, such as asking an employee's doctor, co-worker, family member, or other person about

Example

Undue Financial Burden:

A small nonprofit organization, with an annual budget of $150,000, desires to sponsor an NCCC program to do reclamation of the shoreline at a local reserve. An applicant who uses a wheelchair and is a qualified individual with a disability for the position requires a modified wheelchair to perform the essential functions of the position. The specialized wheelchair that moves on sand and beach costs about $20,000.

Suggestion: However, the program can rent a modified wheelchair for the applicant for the duration of the project.

an employee's disability/potential disability; asking about genetic information; asking an employee to provide medical documentation about his/her disability (unless in the context of employee's reasonable accommodation request); or monitoring an employee's taking of drugs or medications.

"Non-disability-related inquiry" includes:

- Asking about an employee's well being. Asking "How are you?" "Are you feeling OK?" "Are your allergies bad today?" or "How are you doing [after divorce, death of loved one, etc.]?"
- Asking about non-disability impairments, such as "How did you break your leg?"
- Asking whether he/she has been drinking or asking about current illegal use of drugs.
- Asking for name and phone number of an emergency contact person.

Not all medical or health procedures are considered to be medical examinations. "Medical Exams" include vision tests; blood, urine, and breath analyses to check for alcohol use; blood, urine, saliva, and hair analyses to detect genetic markers; blood pressure screening and cholesterol testing; nerve conduction, range-of-motion or pulmonary tests; psychological tests designed to identify a mental disorder or impairment; and X-rays, CAT scans, MRIs.

"Medical Exams" do not include:

- Tests to determine current illegal use of drugs
- Physical agility and fitness tests (as long as they measure employee's ability to perform actual or simulated service tasks and do not include medical exams [e.g., measuring heart rate or blood pressure])
- Tests to evaluate ability to read labels or distinguish objects (as long as they are part of a demonstration of the ability to perform actual service functions)

- Psychological tests that measure personality traits like honesty preferences, and habits

- Polygraph exams (as long as no disability-related questions are asked)

Disability-related inquiries and medical examinations may not be made prior to making an applicant an offer. The only minor exception to this is discussed in the Inclusive Interviewing and Service Selection section (Section V) of this Handbook. During the service term, such inquiries or examinations are permitted only if they are "job-related and consistent with business necessity" and if they occur under the following circumstances:

- You have a reasonable belief, **based on objective evidence**, that the participant's ability to perform an essential function will be impaired by a medical condition or the participant will pose a direct threat to the health or safety of self or others due to a medical condition. Under these circumstances, an assessment of the individual and his/her position is **required**. This assessment cannot be based on general assumptions, but must be based on objective evidence available to you prior to making an inquiry or requiring a medical exam.

- The service participant requests a reasonable accommodation. However, you may only make disability-related inquiries and request medical documentation when the disability is not known or obvious. In addition, you may only request documentation on the nature, severity, and duration of the impairment; on the functional limitations on the participant's specific position; and to substantiate any accommodation need.

- You know or have been given reliable information by a credible third party about the participant's medical condition; you have observed performance problems; and you can reasonably attribute the problems to the medical condition.

- The service participant requests sick leave; when a participant, who received extended sick leave, requests an extension of the sick leave; or when a participant, who has been on leave for a medical condition, seeks to return to work.

Appendices

APPENDIX A
Glossary

Access: Provision of a barrier-free environment, accommodations, or changes in policies, procedures, or the built environment to ensure that all individuals can benefit from, and participate in, all activities and events of a program.

Accessibility Survey: Survey of programs and policies, and the architectural, communication, and technological environment as it relates to the participation of individuals with a range of disabilities.

Accommodations: Any device, technology, service, or change in programs, policies, or the built environment that are provided to an individual with a disability to support them in their service or participation.

Alternate Formats: Different ways of providing information other than standard print documents. Some examples of alternate formats are: text files on a computer disk, large print, books on tape, Braille.

Americans with Disabilities Act 1990 (ADA): Provides civil rights protection to people with disabilities and guarantees those covered by the law equal opportunity in employment, state and local government services, transportation, places of public accommodation, and telecommunications services.

Americans with Disabilities Act Architectural Access Guidelines (ADAAG): Technical requirements under the ADA for accessibility to buildings and facilities by individuals with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. We recommend following the ADAAG requirements for Section 504 compliance.

Architectural Access: Refers to the "built" or physical environment and the ability of persons with a range of disabilities to get to, from, and around that built environment.

Assistive Listening Device: A device that makes sound clearer and louder, and in many cases, blocks out environmental sound and interference. Most often persons with hearing loss will use assistive listening devices.

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

Assistive Technology Service: Any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. Service includes evaluation of need; selection; purchase; coordination of related services; training and technical assistance.

Attitudinal Barriers: Attitudes, fears, and assumptions that prevent people with and without disabilities from meaningfully interacting with one another.

Augmentative Communication: Alternative means of communication used by an individual with a disability who has a severe speech or cognitive impairment. An augmentative communication device may have a keyboard that the individual types on a computerized-voice output that relays the message. It might also be a sheet of paper with photos or pictures that a person would point to.

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

Communication Access: Ability of a program to ensure that persons with hearing loss or who are non-verbal can effectively communicate. This can include the provision of interpreters or assistive listening devices, but it can also mean speaking clearly, facing an individual, and writing notes.

Communication Barriers: Lack of communication access for persons with hearing loss, including poorly lit rooms, background noise, lack of interpreters, or captioning.

Community-Based Living: Refers to individuals with disabilities living in the community with or without supports from individuals and community-based organizations.

Consumer: A term sometimes used for people with disabilities instead of "patient" or "client" to communicate their active and equal role in accessing services.

Developmentally Disabled: Defined in law as a person with a "severe and chronic disability" that is attributed to a mental or physical impairment or combination; is manifested before age 22; and results in substantial functional limitation in at least three major life activities. The term is also used to refer to people who are diagnosed with mental retardation.

Direct Threat: A legal term referring to a situation when a disabling condition may pose a threat to safety of an individual or others.

Disability, Person with a: Defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 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-Related Inquiry: Any question or action likely to elicit the possible presence of a disability.

Disability Rights Movement: The collective efforts of advocates to secure equal rights, equal opportunities, and a barrier-free environment for people with disabilities.

Essential Service Functions/Duties: The fundamental duties of a service position the individual with a disability holds or desires. A function may be considered essential because the reason the position exists is to perform that function; because of the limited number of individuals among whom the performance of that job function can be distributed; and/or because the function is highly specialized and the individual was selected for his or her expertise or ability to perform the particular function. It does not include the marginal functions of the position.

Functional Limitations: Limitations to life activities that result from a disability.

Inaccessible: Any program, activity, or event that is not open to or excludes individuals with disabilities by reason of an inaccessible physical space or the lack of accommodations.

Inclusion: Active engagement of people with disabilities in all levels of society. The mere presence of people with disabilities does not necessarily constitute inclusion. A program is inclusive when people with disabilities are valued contributing members with a sense of belonging.

Inclusive Service Environment: A service program, site, or activity that actively engages individuals with disabilities as valued and equal members of a team and is open and accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Independent Living Centers (ILCs): National network of community based organizations with a mission to "advance the independent living philosophy and advocate for the human rights of and services for, people with disabilities to further their full integration and participation in society."

Independent Living Movement: Advocacy movement that views the person with a disability as an active "consumer" of services and advocates for personal independence, barrier removal, equal rights and opportunities, and consumer choice and control.

Institutional Segregation/ Institutionalization: Practice of removing persons with disabilities from their communities to institutional care.

Interpreter: A certified or trained individual who facilitates communication between individuals who use sign language and individuals who do not. There are also "oral" interpreters who repeat what is being said so that individuals who rely on speech reading can communicate.

Life Activity: Functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

Marginal Functions: Functions that can easily be reassigned or changed without altering the nature of the position.

Medicaid: Jointly funded, Federal-State health insurance program for qualified individuals. It covers approximately 36 million individuals including children, seniors, persons with disabilities, and people who are eligible to receive federally assisted income maintenance payments.

Medicare: Health insurance that covers seniors and some people with disabilities based on their work experience or the work experience of a spouse or parent.

National Disability Organizations: National organizations that support, advocate for, assist, and/or serve individuals with disabilities.

Paratransit: Publicly funded transportation for persons who are unable to use mass transportation.

People First Language: Language that puts the person first when speaking of someone with a disability to remind us that they are people first. 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."

Personal Assistance Service (PAS): Consumer-directed services that enable an individual with physical, mental, or sensory disabilities to live in his/her home and community and carry out functions of daily living, self-care, and mobility.

Physical Barriers: Physical obstacles that hinder people with physical disabilities from gaining access.

Physical or Mental Impairment: Any physiological disorder, or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more body systems, or any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.

Programmatic Access: Policies that allow for, facilitate, and embrace full participation of people with disabilities in service.

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

Real Time Captioning: Process where a captioner types, on a device and in shorthand, words that are spoken and then the words are displayed on a computer monitor, television screen, video or overhead projector, or other type of audiovisual device for individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

Relay Service: A communications service found in all states that provides Communication Assistants who act as intermediaries on the telephone between hearing individuals and individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and/or have speech disabilities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 1973: The federal statute that ensures the rights and participation of individuals with disabilities in federally funded programs.

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act: Section 508 requires that electronic and information technology of federal agencies is accessible to people with disabilities. For more information, go to www.section508.gov.

Self-Advocacy: Refers to a national movement of people with disabilities speaking and advocating for themselves. There are self-advocacy organizations throughout the United States.

Self-Disclose: Action by an individual with a disability to identify their disability to another individual or individuals.

Service Description: A document that outlines the essential and marginal functions of a service position.

SSDI (Social Security Disability Income): Benefit available to individuals who have a work history (or are the child or widow of insured), and due to disability, are no longer able to work.

SSI: The Supplementary Security Income: A nationwide, federal-assistance program administered by the Social Security Administration that guarantees a minimum level of income for adults and children with a disability who have an insufficient work history.

Substantially Limits: The inability to perform a major life activity that the average person in the general population can perform; or significant restriction as to the condition, manner, or duration under which an individual can perform a particular major life activity as compared to the average person in the general population.

Temporary/Transient Barriers: Barriers in the "built" or physical environment created by objects such as furniture, parked cars, planters, and other barriers that can easily be removed.

Three Part Definition of a Person with a Disability: 1) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or 2) a record of such impairment; or 3) a perception of such an impairment, even when the impairment does not exist.

Transportation Barriers: Absence of accessible, reliable, and affordable transportation.

TTY/TDD: Telecommunications device for individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing or have speech impairments.

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

Voice Recognition: Assistive technology software that allows people to write and command equipment using their voice rather than their hands. This technology has been used to accommodate people with a variety of disabilities.

Work Incentives Program: Options for people who are receiving disability benefits and want to enter the work or service force while minimizing adverse effects on their SSA benefits. For more information contact the Social Security Administration (website: www.ssa.gov).

APPENDIX B
Sample of Self-Evaluation Checklist

Self-Evaluation Checklist for Grantees

The following checklist is designed to allow grantees to readily assess major architectural features and facilities for accessibility. The checklist is intended to allow grantees, when walking through their facilities and those of subgrantees, or when visiting potential locations for meetings, conferences, training sessions, or events, to evaluate some of the most basic elements of accessibility without having to actually measure distances, slopes, forces, etc. Note: This is not a full self-evaluation, nor will it ensure legal compliance. It will give you a "snapshot" of the accessibility of a facility.

Outside the Building

Persons with mobility and vision impairments need accessible routes — smooth, non-slip, no protrusions or overhangs that can trip or bump them - from parking area, street, and/or bus stop. Persons with many types of physical impairments need parking spaces near entrances because walking distances are difficult or dangerous for them. Persons using wheelchairs or other mobility aids need parking spaces with an access aisle for opening car doors and loading/unloading equipment. Steps at the entrance to the building can be a barrier for persons with different types of mobility impairments.

- **Route:**
  Is the route to the entrance from parking or street smooth, not gravel, with no grade changes of more than 1/2", and no lengthwise grates more than 1/2" wide where wheelchairs could get stuck? Is the route wide enough for a wheelchair — 36"? (Think yardstick.) Are there curb cuts, with gently flared sides, where needed and usable? (Think through the route someone using a wheelchair would have to travel.) Are there no protrusions or overhanging tree limbs not detectable by a cane? (Think a basketball player using a cane.)

- **Parking:**
  Are accessible spaces reserved nearest the accessible entrance and on an accessible route? Is an accessibility symbol on the space mounted high enough so it's not hidden by a parked vehicle? Is there an access aisle next to the space that is flat and 5' wide? (Think average person, with arms outstretched, is 6' across.) Is there an accessible route from the access aisle to the sidewalk or other accessible route?

- **Entrance:**
  Is a principle entrance located on an accessible route? Is the entrance not a revolving door or turnstile? Is there a flat surface on both sides of the door for maneuvering a wheelchair? Is the door width at least 32"? (Think yardstick minus two closed fists.) Is door hardware at a level reachable by someone using a wheelchair and is it push/pull or lever operated? Is there no more than 1/2" threshold? Does the door require no more that 8.5 lbs of force to open? (Think opening your refrigerator door.) If there are steps, is there also a ramp to access the entrance? Is the ramp gently sloped, with handrails, no drop-offs, smooth surfaced with a level top and bottom platforms for resting and turning? Are doormats attached to the floor at all four corners? (Think trip hazards.)

Inside the Building

Persons who walk with difficulty or use wheelchairs, crutches, canes, or walkers need a wide, smooth, level, and firm surface. Persons who are sight-impaired need a path free of hazards. Persons with upper-body impairments need non-twist knobs, handles, and doors that are not too heavy. Persons with hearing impairments need visual elevator controls and persons with vision impairments need audible ones. Persons with mobility impairments need restrooms that they can get to and use easily and safely, and stairs with uniform tread, width, and handrails which guide them and indicate landings.

- **Route:**
  Is there an accessible route connecting all parts of the facility that is wide enough for a wheelchair — 36"? (Think yardstick. Don't forget about temporary barriers like boxes and chairs.) Is carpeting low-pile, tightly woven, and securely fastened along edges? Are doors at least 32" wide? (Think yardstick

minus two closed fists.) Is door hardware at a level reachable by someone using a wheelchair and is it push/pull or lever in your house.) Are there no protrusions or overhanging obstructions not detectable by a cane? (Think a basketball player using a cane.)

- **Elevators/Stairs:**
  Elevators provide adequate maneuvering space, time to get to and enter the cab, are conveniently located, have tactile controls, and both audible and visual indicators for direction of travel and floors. Elevator controls are reachable by a person using a wheelchair, doors remain open at least 3 seconds, and elevator stops within 1/2″ when stopping at floor. Stair step heights are uniform, depths are uniform and at least 11″, and there are no overhangs greater than 1-1/2″. Handrails are continuous from top to bottom floor, without stopping at landings.

- **Restrooms:**
  At least one is on an accessible route and identified by an accessibility symbol. Doors are 32″ wide with non-twist knobs and handles. They include adequate maneuvering space as persons enter, either restroom or stalls (preferably 5′ x 5′). Toilet height (17″ — 19″) and located no more than 18″ from center of toilet to closest wall. (Think tile dimensions:4″ x 4″, 4″ x 6″, or 8″ x 8″.) Urinals have elongated rims and clear floor space in front. Fixtures are located so they are usable by a person using a wheelchair.

- **Emergency Warning Signals:**
  Are both visual (flashing) and audible warning signals provided?

- **Assembly, Meeting, and Conference Areas:**
  Are level wheelchair spaces available on an accessible route, with a variety of unobstructed views of the stage? Are auxiliary listening systems, volume controls, wireless headphones, infrared audio loops, and radio frequency available for persons with hearing impairments?

- **Drinking Fountains:**
  Are they low enough so someone using a wheelchair can use them? (Think 36″ or a yardstick.) Is there access space in front? Are the controls operable with one hand without grasping or twisting?

- **Telephones:**
  Are public telephones located on an accessible route, with clear floor space and low enough for use by a person using a wheelchair? Do the phones have push button controls? Do they offer volume controls? TTY service? Are telephones for employees and participants modified to meet their specific needs?

- **Picnic Areas:**
  Are tables available with one end extended or with a portion of a bench removed that are on an accessible route? Are grills and trash receptacles at an accessible height, and do grills have rounded corners so they are not a safety hazard to visually impaired persons?

- **Exhibits, Signs, and Information Displays:**
  Are they adequately lighted, in high-contrast colors, in large, easy-to-read print, and at levels where the material may be read by short persons or persons using wheelchairs? Do tactile objects allow persons with visual impairments to enjoy exhibits and displays? Is audio information available to persons with hearing impairments in some other format?

Note:

Especially when reserving hotel space, be aware that persons with disabilities require a variety of services. Some require a TTY telephone. Others require roll-in or sitting showers or lounge chairs instead of flat beds. Some require accessible restroom facilities. Always notify meeting, conference, or event participants that reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request and provide a date and contact for making such requests.

APPENDIX C
Tips for Presenting in Audiences with People with Disabilities

The following are some tips to ensure that your presentation is accessible to everyone in your audience. Remember that everyone in your audience is there because your workshop has value to them — everyone should have access to all of the information, comments, and questions that are part of a good workshop.

1. Before you begin, make sure that everyone has the accommodations they need: Are the listening systems working? Is large print/Braille available? Can everyone see the interpreters?

2. Face the audience.

3. Keep your mouth and face free of obstructions such as hands, microphone, and papers.

4. If you tend to speak quickly or softly, please slow down and speak up. There is a short delay when using interpreters or captioners.

5. If you are using visual aids — PowerPoint, flip charts, slides — take a moment to describe the visual message, e.g., "This chart compares the number of apples to the number of oranges." "There is a flower in the upper-right-hand corner."

6. Use "people first" language, e.g., "people with disabilities", or "people with developmental disabilities."

7. If someone who is speech-impaired is speaking, wait calmly for him or her to finish. Do not interrupt them. If you do not understand them, ask them to repeat their statement or question. If you still do not understand, restate what you did understand, and ask for more information.

8. If interpreters are being used, face the person using the interpreter, not the interpreter.

9. If someone has a personal attendant, address him or her, not the attendant.

10. Restate questions before answering.

APPENDIX D
Resources

General Disability Resources

The Access Board: Sets guidelines for accessibility standards. Provides technical assistance on accessibility requirements for transportation, architecture, and communication. 800-872-2253 (voice), 800-993-2822 (TTY) website: www.access-board.gov

ADA Information Line: The Department of Justice's toll-free hotline to obtain answers to general and technical questions about the ADA and to order technical assistance materials. 800-514-0301 (voice, 800-514-0383 (TTY), website: www.usdoj.gov/crt/adahoml.htm

Independent Living Centers (ILCs): Community based, consumer controlled, non-profit centers governed by a board of directors of whom at least 51% are people with disabilities. Core services provided include: peer counseling, information and referral, independent living skills training, and advocacy.

Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs): DBTACs are federally-funded technical assistance and training centers that provide all members of the public assistance with the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. 800 949-4232 (voice/TDD), website: www.adata.org

www.disabilitydirect.gov: This site supports President George W. Bush's administration goals outlined in the New Freedom Initiative to use information technology to deliver government services anytime, anywhere, to reduce barriers to the employment of people with disabilities. It includes everything from the civil rights laws, including the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, disability statistics, and architectural design standards, to information on interview questions, communication, web sites and other accessible technology, and personal assistance services and other accommodations. It has links to various recruitment resources, and to other federal agency and organization web sites. It is an excellent "one-stop" information center.

Job Accommodation Network (JAN): JAN is a federally funded technical assistance center for accommodations. They offer consultation and recommendations and extensive information relating to reasonable accommodations. 800-526-7234 (voice/TDD), website: www.jan.wvu.edu

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities: This site is an excellent "one stop" for contact information for various clearinghouses and disability organizations. It includes over 100 organizations, with addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and websites, and was developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. The listed organization can provide a wealth of information about specific disabilities. 800-695-0285 (voice/TTY), website: www.nichcy.org

American Self-Help Clearinghouse: A national clearinghouse for self-help organizations and other resources for individuals with disabilities web site: www.selfhelpgroups.org.

Social Security Administration (SSA): This is the federal agency responsible for administering income maintenance programs for persons with disabilities. A list of state vocational rehabilitation offices can be found on the Social Security Administration's website. 800-772-1213 (voice) 800-325-0778 (TTY) website: www.ssa.gov

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ): This is the federal agency charged with enforcing parts of the Americans with Disabilities Act. They provide a wealth of information on their website. www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada

National and Community Service Disability Resources

Additional resources are also available through National Service Resource Center's website www.etr.org/nsrc:

Access: Opening the Doors Conference: Questions and Answers Responses to questions concerning legal responsibilities, reasonable accommodations, program accessibility, disability funds, member compensation, and recruitment as they relate to including people with disabilities in national service. website: www.nationalservice.org/resources/crossfindex.html

AmeriCorps: Everyone Can Serve Everyone Can Succeed: A Guide to Creating and Maintaining a Diverse Corps prepared by and available through the Institute on Disabilities Pennsylvania's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service. 215- 204-1356 (voice/TTY) website: www.temple.edu/instLdisabilities email: lisson@vm.temple.edu

The Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI): The Corporation for National Service funded National Training and Technical Assistance provider. 617-355-4788 (voice), 617-355-6956 (TDD), 617-355-7940 (fax) email: paula.sotnik@tch.harvard.edu

The Corporation for National Service's Equal Opportunity Office:
202-606-5000, ext. 312 (voice), 202-565-2799 (TDD), website: www.nationalservice.org, email: eo@cns.gov

The following guidelines for Corporation Grantees are available as downloadable PDF files at: www.cns.gov/about/eorndex.html

- Non-Harassment Guidelines
- Acceptable Interview Questions
- A Quick Primer on Disability Law
- Accessibility Guidelines
- Non-Discrimination Guidelines

Legal Documents and Resources

U.S. Department of Justice Guide to Disability Rights Laws
website: www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/cguide.htm

ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (ADAAG)
website: www.access-board.gov/adaag/htm/adaag.htm

National and Community Service Legislation and Regulations:
National Service legislation and regulations can be found through the Corporation for National and Community Service website:
www.nationalservice.org/resources/cross/regs.html

To learn more about national service programs, the National Service Fellowship program and the Corporation for National and Community Service visit the website:
www.nationalservice.org

Recruitment Resources

Employment Assistance Referral Network (EARN):
This is a free service of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy which provides you with a direct connection to your local community disability service providers. When you are ready to recruit qualified candidates with disabilities for participant positions, contact EARN and its staff will locate providers in your local community who have contact with appropriate candidates. Once providers are identified, EARN will call you with the contact information for the provider so you can connect with the applicants. 866-EarnNow (866-327-6669) (voice), website: www.earnworks.com

Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP):
This is a free resource of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy for locating college students and recent graduates who have severe disabilities. Beginning the Wednesday of the third week in March each year, you may request an easy-to-use database of pre-screened college students with disabilities to fill summer or permanent hiring needs. These candidates, from more than 160 colleges and universities, represent a variety of academic majors and range from college freshmen to students in graduate school or law school.
724-891-3533 (voice), 724-891-0275 (fax), website: www.wrpjobs.com

State Governors' Committees on Employment of People with Disabilities:
The governors' committees provide employment information and referral services within their respective states. Governors' Committees are funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and are listed under state government agencies in your telephone directory. website: www.dol.gov/dol/odep/public/state.htm

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
This federal department supports a nationwide employment training program for veterans with service-connected disabilities who qualify for vocational rehabilitation. Regional or local offices are listed under federal government agencies in your telephone directory. (Do not contact the medical centers for this purpose).
800-827-1000 (voice)

State and Local Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies
These agencies, funded through U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration, help individuals with physical or mental disabilities to obtain employment. They are listed under state government agencies in your telephone directory.

National Disability Organizations

The disability organizations listed below are a sampling of national disability organizations. The following organizations have worked with ***Access AmeriCorps*** in the past. This list is not inclusive of all disability organizations that have been involved in or contributed to national and community service. A comprehensive list of disability organizations can found at the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHY) 800-695-0285 (voice/TTY), website: www.nichcy.org.

The Arc (formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens of the U.S.)
1010 Wayne Avenue, Suite 650
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-565-3842
E-mail: Info@thearc.org
website: www.thearc.org

Brain Injury Association
(formerly the National Head Injury Foundation)
105 North Alfred Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
800-444-6443, 703-236-6000
Publications available in Spanish
E-mail: FamilyHelpline@biausa.org
website: www.biausa.org

Easter Seals-National Office
Chicago, IL 60606
800- 221-6827; 312-726-6200 (voice)
(312) 726-4258 (TTY)
E-Mail: info@easter-seals.org
website: www.easter-seals.org

Epilepsy Foundation
4351 Garden City Drive, 5th Floor
Landover, MD 20785-4941
800-332-1000, 301-459-3700
Publications available in Spanish
Spanish speaker on staff
E-mail: postmaster@efa.org
website: www.efa.org

Independent Living Research Utilization Project
The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research
2323 South Sheppard, Suite 1000
Houston,TX 77019
713-520-0232 (voice), 713-520-5136 (TTY)
E-mail: ilru@ilru.org
website: www.ilru.org

Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA)
3300 East Sunrise Drive
Tucson, AZ 85718
800-572-1717, 520-529-2000
Publications available in Spanish. Spanish speaker on staff
E-mail: mda@mdausa.org
website: www.mdausa.org

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)
Colonial Place Three, 2107 Wilson Blvd, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201-3042
800-950-6264, 703-524-7600 (voice)
703-516-7991 (TTY)
Publications available in Spanish. Spanish speaker on staff
E-mail: helpline@nami.org
website: www.nami.org

National Association of the Deaf
814 Thayer Avenue, Suite 250
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301- 587-1788 (voice), 301-587-1789 (TTY)
E-mail: nadinfo@nad.org
website: www.nad.org

National Association of Protection and Advocacy
Systems (NAPAS)
900 Second Street N.E., Suite 211
Washington, DC 20002
202-408-9514 (voice), 202-408-9521 (TTY)
E-mail: napas@earthlink.net
website: www.protectionandadvocacy.com/

National Council on Independent Living
1916 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 209
Arlington,VA 22201
703-525-3406 (voice), 703- 525-4153 (TTY)
E-mail: ncil@ncil.org
website: www.ncil.org

National Federation for the Blind
1800 Johnson Street
Baltimore, MD 21230
410-659-9314
E-mail: nfb@nfb.org
website: www.nfb.org

National Mental Health Association
1021 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-2971
800- 969-6642, 703-684-7722 (voice)
800-433-5959 (TTY)
Publications available in Spanish
E-mail: nmhainfo@aol.com
website: www.nmha.org

National Multiple Sclerosis Society
733 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10017
800-344-4867, 212-986-3240
E-mail: info@nmss.org
website: www.nmss.org

National Parent Network on Disabilities
1130 17th Street N.W, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
202-463-2299 (V/TTY)
E-Mail: npnd@cs.com
website: www.npnd.org

National Spinal Cord Injury Association
8300 Colesville Road, Suite 551
Silver Spring, MD 20910
800-962-9629, 301-588-6959
E-mail: nscia2@aol.com
website: www.spinalcord.org

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
8630 Fenton Street, Suite 324
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301- 608-0050 (voice/TTY)
E-mail: info@rid.org
website: www.rid.org

Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc.
7910 Woodmont Ave, Suite 1200
Bethesda, Maryland, 20814
301-657-2248 (voice)
301-657-2249 (TTY)
301-913-9413 (fax)
Email:national@shhh.org
website: www.shhh.org

Spina Bifida Association of America
4590 MacArthur Boulevard, N.W., Suite 250
Washington, D.C.20007-4226
800- 621-3141, 202-944-3285
Publications available in Spanish
E-mail: sbaa@sbaa.org
website: www.sbaa.org

Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers (the Alliance)
PACER Center
8161 Normandale Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044
888-248-0822, 952-838-9000 (voice)
952-838-0190 (TTY)
Spanish speaker on staff
E-mail: alliance@taalliance.org
website: www.taalliance.org

UCP
1660 L Street, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
202-776-0406, 800- 872-5827 (voice)
(202) 973-7197 (TTY)
Publications available in Spanish
E-Mail: ucpnatl@ucp.org
website: www.ucp.org

Some of the above resources were obtained through the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHY) website.