

Onondaga County DSS Americans with Disabilities Act Policy

In April 2006, the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance issued 06-ADM-05, Providing Access to Temporary Assistance Programs for Persons with Disabilities and/or Limited English Proficiency (LEP). This policy is being issued to implement 06-ADM-05 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act in Onondaga County DSS programs and services.

I. General requirements of the ADA/504

- DSS must provide an equal and meaningful opportunity to people with disabilities to participate in and benefit from DSS programs.
- DSS cannot use methods of program administration with a discriminatory effect on people with disabilities.
- DSS will make reasonable accommodations when necessary to avoid discrimination

II. Who must comply with this policy

The ADA and § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and this policy apply to all Onondaga County DSS programs, including but not limited to Family assistance, Safety Net Assistance, Medicaid, Food Stamps, Emergency Assistance Child Care, and Children and Family Services programs. The policy also applies to JobsPlus, Medicaid managed care providers and all other DSS programs provided by contractors. All DSS contracts shall contain a requirement that its contractors comply with the provisions of the ADA and § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This policy shall be provided to all DSS contractors who are required to be in compliance with the ADA and § 504. Complaints of ADA/504 violations by DSS contractors should be referred to Paula Engel, the ADA/504 compliance officer at 435-2585 x131 or paula.engel@dfa.state.ny.us

III. Who is protected by the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

The ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act apply to all individuals who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. This is a very broad definition that covers many individuals, including many people who do not receive and do not qualify for disability benefits (such as SSI or SSD).

Examples of physical impairments: Blindness, low vision, deafness, hearing limitations, arthritis, cerebral palsy, HIV, AIDS, traumatic brain injury, high blood pressure, asthma, irritable bowel syndrome, quadriplegia, cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, anatomical loss, alcoholism, past illegal use of drugs are all examples of impairments. This is not a complete list of physical

impairments.

Examples of mental impairments: Clinical depression, bi-polar disorder (manic depression), anxiety disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia), attention deficit disorder, mental retardation. This is not a complete list of mental impairments.

Examples of major life activities: Engaging in manual tasks, walking, standing, lifting, bending, performing manual tasks, speaking, hearing, seeing, breathing, eating, sleeping, taking care of oneself, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, and working. Major life activities also include major bodily functions such as bladder, bowel, digestive, immune system, cell growth, brain, neurological, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

The determination of whether someone has a disability under the ADA is not a searching inquiry: The focus of DSS staff should be on ensuring that individuals have equal and meaningful access to our programs and services, not a detailed analysis of whether individual meets the ADA/504 definition of disability.

DSS applicants, recipients, and members of the public: The ADA and Section 504 protect individuals receiving DSS benefits and services, those applying for benefits and services, and others. For example, an individual with a disability who wants information about DSS programs who has not yet applied for benefits has a right to access that information and a right to reasonable accommodations (see below) to do so. Family members and others who accompany someone applying for benefits cannot be discriminated against by DSS.

The individual must meet essential program eligibility requirements: If an individual does not meet essential program eligibility requirements (e.g., income, resource, and immigration requirements), it is not discriminatory to exclude the person from a DSS program.

Past history of a disability: The ADA and § 504 also protect individuals with a past history of a disability from discrimination based on that history.

Regarded as having a disability: The ADA and § 504 protects individuals who DSS staff believe have a disability from discrimination. For example, DSS cannot discriminate against someone based on a belief that a minor condition is much more limiting than it is. Nor can DSS discriminate against someone because she takes medication, and DSS believes that means she has some type of disability.

IV. ADA/504 Coordinator

Paula Engel, director of the legal division, (435-2585 x131) is the ADA Coordinator for Onondaga County DSS. It is her responsibility to oversee and monitor ADA/504 compliance, advise staff in accommodating clients, and recommending policy and procedure changes to improve ADA compliance, and take the other actions specified in this policy. The ADA Coordinator has the authority to instruct staff to modify rules and procedures to accommodate

individuals with disabilities. The Coordinator is also responsible for investigating and deciding ADA/504 grievances. However, it is each worker's responsibility to comply with the ADA and to provide accommodations to clients. Staff do not need the Coordinator's permission to provide routine, obviously reasonable accommodations to clients.

V. ADA/504 grievance procedure

Anyone has a right to file a grievance with Onondaga County DSS if the person believes she was denied an accommodation or was discriminated against in another way as a result of a disability. Onondaga County DSS has a grievance form that individuals can use to file a grievance [Attachment C], but they are not required to use it. DSS staff must help individuals fill out a grievance form if they need help as a reasonable accommodation. If a grievance is submitted to a DSS staff person, the staff person must forward it to the ADA/504 Coordinator. DSS staff must tell anyone who requested accommodations who are dissatisfied, and anyone who believes he or she was treated unfairly because of a disability about the right to file a grievance and offer them a grievance form.

Grievances must be investigated and decided within 10 business days. While a grievance is pending, DSS should not reduce the client's benefits, close the client's case, or take other adverse action against the client. If the individual has also requested a fair hearing, the ADA/504 Coordinator must still investigate and decide the grievance. If the grievance is denied, the ADA Coordinator must issue a written denial explaining the reason for the denial.

The ADA Coordinator shall submit copies of ADA/504 grievances and decisions on those grievances to OTDA's Bureau of Equal Opportunity Development.

The ADA Coordinator should consider whether one or more grievances on an issue indicates the need for changes in policies or practices, and if so, take steps to obtain these changes.

VI. Physical accessibility

If a building or part of a building where DSS services are provided is not physically accessible, DSS must ensure that the individual is provided meaningful access to services through other means, by either holding appointments with clients in another office in the building or at a different location, holding an appointment at the client's home, conducting appointments over the phone, allowing an authorized representative to attend the appointment for the individual, or by other means.

VII. No separate programs

People with disabilities cannot be put in separate programs (e.g., separate education and training programs) just because they have disabilities. If a person meets the essential eligibility requirements for a program, he or she has a right to participate in that program.

VIII. Services must be provided in the most integrated setting

DSS must provide services to people with disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the person with a disability.

IX. DSS must provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities

DSS must provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities. A reasonable accommodation is any reasonable change in the way DSS does something for a person with a disability or allows a person to do something. Clerical and line staff, not just supervisors and administrators, will be trained in the ADA and have authority to make reasonable accommodations as appropriate. Supervisory staff will ensure that all DSS employees understand their obligations to make reasonable accommodations for disabled applicants and recipients (A/R) and to assist staff in resolving complicated situations. Whenever a clerical or line staff employee considers denying a requested accommodation, the decision shall be conferenced with a supervisor before a final determination is made.

Examples of accommodations that may be provided:

- Help with a filling out an application for benefits and help with gathering documents showing eligibility for benefits or a disability
- Accommodations in appointments, including scheduling appointments at time of day that will prevent long waits; seeing clients who cannot wait on a priority basis; scheduling appointments so they do not conflict with doctor's appointments, rehab, or therapy; combining appointments to reduce travel; home visits for individuals who have difficulty traveling to DSS or attending appointments at DSS for disability-related reasons; allowing clients to reschedule appointments when a disability prevents attendance.
- Giving a person more time to submit documents or complete other tasks
- Providing additional explanations of forms and program rules
- Allowing an individual to bring a friend, relative, neighbor, or advocate with them to DSS appointments and during the application process
- With the client's consent, sending copies of notices to a client's friend, relative or neighbor who can remind the client of appointments and/or help the client attend an appointment
- Reading notices and other program materials to the client

- Providing notices, applications, and other program materials in alternative formats (e.g., large print, Braille, audiotape, etc.)
- Modifying welfare work activities (discussed below)
- Modifying agency policies for people with disabilities when necessary to avoid discrimination (e.g., shelter policies, appointment policies, no-animal policies, policies about how a task must be done)
- Allowing clients with disabilities to communicate with a worker by email or other methods when needed for a disability-related reason
- Allowing clients to submit documents by fax when needed for a disability-related reason
- Many other things

Accommodations in program rules: Rules must be modified for people with disabilities when reasonable. For example, rules requiring staff to see clients in the order in which they arrive at DSS, rules requiring clients to come to DSS for appointments, and rules requiring clients applying for benefits to come to DSS on particular days of the week or times of day, must all be modified for people with disabilities when necessary to provide an equal and meaningful opportunity to participate in DSS programs.

Accommodations for family members: In some situations, DSS must accommodate family members with a disability so an applicant/recipient has meaningful access to the program. For example, if a parent receives SSI and is applying for cash assistance for her child, DSS must accommodate the parent so her child has an equal and meaningful opportunity to participate in the cash assistance program.

Accommodations in work activities: (See also § XVIII re: jobseekers) Clients may be entitled to a number of different types of accommodations in cash assistance work requirements, including:

- Assignment to a particular program, work site, or job appropriate for the individual given her disabilities, as documented.
- Part-time activities (less than 30 hours per week) if the client cannot participate full-time because of a disability or disability-related treatment, as documented.
- Accommodations at a job site or education and training program (e.g., equipment, modification or rules or procedures, job coaches, tutors, modified training materials), with documentation of need.

- Assignment to activities that are not countable towards federal work participation rates (e.g., rehab or therapy for more than 4 consecutive weeks a year)
- Exemptions from work activities if the person cannot participate as a result of a disability, even with the accommodations listed above, as documented.

The client's employability plan should contain information about the client's disability-related limitations, the accommodations needed, and whose responsibility it is to ensure that they are provided.

Accommodations needed on an ongoing basis: Many accommodations are needed on an ongoing basis. Once a staff person determines that an accommodation is necessary, she should indicate the need for this accommodation (though not the client's diagnosis) prominently in the case records so other staff who interact with the client are aware of it. Information about an accommodation should be denoted in the 3209 report. In addition, the staff person should take the steps needed to make sure that the accommodation is provided without request in the future (until the client's condition changes or the accommodation is no longer needed), so the client does not have to ask for it each time. For example, a client who is unable to travel to DSS for appointments should not receive routine appointment notices requiring the client to go to appointments at DSS.

Using information the agency already has to accommodate clients: The agency should use information it already has about a client (e.g., from past applications or receipt of benefits) to offer accommodations to clients even if the client hasn't requested an accommodation.

Accommodations for those with mental health problems and/or cognitive disabilities: Many DSS clients have mental disabilities and need accommodations as a result (such as help filling out an application and getting documents supporting eligibility, help reading documents and notices, additional explanations of program rules, reminder calls about appointments, etc.) Some clients have a relative, friend, advocate, or service provider who can assist them, but many do not. DSS cannot assume that all clients with a cognitive disability or mental health problem has someone to assist them.

Accommodating clients based on behavior: Some clients are not aware that they have disabilities (e.g., mental disabilities) and are therefore unlikely to request reasonable accommodations, even though they need and are entitled to them. Some clients behave in a hostile or disruptive manner because of a disability (e.g., a mental disability).

Clients should not be referred to other agencies as an accommodation: Applicants and recipients with disabilities may need other services (e.g., mental health care) that DSS does not provide. Referring clients to other agencies and services may be appropriate in such instances,

but it is not a substitute for providing accommodations at DSS so the applicant/recipient can obtain DSS services.

Who is responsible for providing reasonable accommodations at DSS: Every worker has a responsibility to provide accommodations. If the worker is not sure if an accommodation is reasonable, the worker should consult with a supervisor or program administrator. However, many accommodations needed by clients are routine and should be provided as a matter of course.

Time frame for providing accommodations: Many accommodations (such as help with completing an application) must be provided on the same day they are requested. Other accommodations should be provided in time to prevent a denial of equal and meaningful access to programs and services. Most accommodations should be provided within 5 days.

DSS cannot require clients to accept an accommodation: Individuals have a right to refuse accommodations. If an individual refuses an offered accommodation and as a result, cannot comply with a program requirement, DSS staff can initiate an adverse action against the client. Before doing so, however, staff should re-offer the accommodation and inform the client that an adverse action may be taken if the client is unable to comply with a requirement as a result of refusing the accommodation.

X. Client disclosure of a disability and obligation to document a disability

Disclosure of a disability is voluntary: Workers must tell clients that they have a right to disclose a disability. Workers should also tell clients that they have a right not to disclose a disability, but if they want a reasonable accommodation, they must disclose a disability.

When can DSS require documentation of a disability? If a client has a disability and asks for accommodation, DSS staff can, in some circumstances, require the client to submit documents from a doctor or other professional showing the existence of a disability and need for an accommodation.

- If a disability is obvious (e.g., blindness, quadriplegia, mental retardation) DSS staff cannot require documentation of the disability.
- If an individual needs an accommodation during the application process but does not have documentation of a disability, DSS must accommodate the person and give the individual a reasonable amount of time to get documentation.
- If an individual needs an accommodation, has no documentation and does not yet have Medicaid coverage or other means to pay for doctor's visits, lab tests, etc., DSS must accommodate the individual until she has the

means to obtain documentation

Disability documentation from clients' own providers: Some clients have previously diagnosed disabilities and have or can obtain documentation of disabilities from their own treating professionals. Staff must consider and give appropriate weight to these documents.

XI. DSS's obligation to record disability-related information in the case record

Staff must record the following information in the client's case record: the client's disability, the type of accommodation requested, whether the request was granted or denied, whether the accommodation was provided, the reason an accommodation request was denied. DSS must also keep a record of all accommodation requests.

XII. Confidentiality of disability-related information

Staff must comply with all applicable confidentiality laws regarding client's disability-related information. At the same time, staff must inform relevant staff at the agency about an individual's need for an accommodation so they can arrange for and/or provide accommodations. DSS staff must get client consent before sharing information about client's disability with contractors or other agencies.

XIII. Service animals

DSS cannot exclude service animals from its programs, or impose limits on access to programs and services. A service animal is any animal trained to perform a task for an individual with a disability, including individuals with vision impairments, hearing impairments, manual impairments, seizure disorders, balance problems, mental health problems, and other impairments. The service animal need not have a harness or be trained by a professional trainer, and individuals with disabilities cannot be required to provide certification proving the animal is a service animal.

XIV. Effective telephone and in-person communication with people with hearing impairments

Aurora of Central New York (422-2429) is the County's designated provider of sign language interpretation services. Alternative providers are Empire Interpreting Services (472-1383) and Whole Me (468-3275). DSS is required to provide, at no cost to the applicant/recipient, a qualified sign language interpreter for deaf or hard of hearing individuals who need them to communicate effectively about their social services benefits. DSS must ensure that communications with people with disabilities, including those with hearing, vision and cognitive impairments is effective. This would include, at minimum, discussions about eligibility for benefits, program rules, client rights and responsibilities, development of employability plans, clients' disabilities and their effect on the ability to comply with work requirements or other program requirements, and/or conciliation meetings. Client's may choose to use friends, relatives or DSS staff for assistance with their communication needs. However, DSS cannot

require or pressure individuals to use a DSS employee, an applicant's/recipient's friends or family members to interpret. Children should never be used to interpret.

For re-certifications or other on-going appointments, appropriate sign language arrangements should be made through Aurora or one of the other sign language interpretation services prior to the appointment. To the extent possible, scheduled interpretive services shall be arranged on three days notice to the interpretation services provider..

If the deaf or hearing impaired individual can read and write English sufficiently well, DSS staff are permitted to write notes to communicate with the person, but only for brief, simple interactions (such as making an appointment with the agency or submitting a document).

To arrange for an interpreter, employees should contact Aurora or one of the other sign language interpretation services listed above. To the maximum extent possible, delays in providing interpreters cannot count against the client. When an appointment is rescheduled for a person with a disability because reasonable accommodations cannot be made on the date the application is filed or the date an attempt is made to file an application, the delay does not affect the application filing date or any other dates relevant to processing of applications. DSS must also address emergency/immediate needs such as impending homelessness, emergency food needs or utility shut-offs of such applicants.

Some individuals with speech and hearing impairments use the following technology/procedures to make and receive phone calls

- TTY (teletext typewriter). If one party to the call does not have a TTY (e.g., DSS), the two parties communicate through a relay operator who has a TTY and can read the TTY text to the party without the TTY and type a response.
- Video Relay. The caller uses a video phone (a computer or TV monitor) and uses sign language to communicate.
- Speech to speech relay. Specially trained relay operators serve as the voice of the person with a speech disability who may be difficult to understand.
- To make a call to a TTY user. Dial 711 and give the relay operator the phone number you want to call. If one party to the call doesn't have video relay equipment, the two parties communicate through a video relay operator who uses American Sign Language to facilitate communication between the deaf and hearing person.
- To receive a call from a TTY user. Just answer the call and communicate through the relay operator.
- To make a call to a video relay user. Just answer the call and communicate through the relay operator.

- To receive a call from a video relay user. Just answer the call and communicate through the relay interpreter.
- To return messages from a relay user. Pay attention to the number on the message. The number may be the client's direct number or it may be the number of a relay operator. If the client uses voice or video relay, you may need to call a relay operator and give the operator the number.

XV Effective communication for individuals with vision impairments

When providing information in written form, the district must, when requested, make that information available to applicants and recipients (A/R) with vision impairments in a format that is usable by the A/R. In determining what type of auxiliary vision aid is appropriate, primary consideration must be given to the request of the individual with the disability. Therefore, the form of the assistance should be dictated by the A/R whenever possible. Documents may be converted to Braille by contacting Beata Karpinska-Prehn of Arise (671-2929) bkarpinska@ariseinc.org or Sonya Miller of Arise (671-2968, smiller@ariseinc.org). Documents to be converted should be in Word format and can be e-mailed directly to Beata or Sonya. Printed documents may be enlarged, either on a copy machine or computer, for easier reading. Regularly used enlarged documents should be maintained for later use with other visually impaired A/Rs. Additionally, to the extent possible, documents may be put on computer discs or e-mailed to A/Rs in formats that are compatible with assistive technology. It is expected that line staff can make these and other accommodations without assistance or approval of the supervisor. For more complicated cases or where the A/R is unsatisfied with the proposed accommodation, the supervisor's role is to offer assistance and ideas to the line worker and A/R about options that may not have been effectively explored. Files must be documented so that the applicable accommodation may be available for future appointments and necessary auxiliary aides and services can be scheduled in advance of the appointment.

In appropriate cases, oral communication may be used to assist visually impaired A/Rs. However, simply reading documents to A/Rs, without more, may not always provide an effective opportunity to participate. Commonly used important documents (e.g., know-your-rights materials, materials describing DSS programs, appointment notices, adverse action notices, fair hearing notices, etc.) should be converted into alternate forms of communication when necessary.

XVI. Other impairments

Because disabilities come in a variety of forms and are unique to the individual, it is not possible to describe the specific accommodations that will apply to all A/Rs seeking assistance. All interventions should begin with the simple question to the A/R of what accommodation or assistance they require to fully participate in the DSS program at issue. For individuals who can't read because of cognitive or learning disabilities, applications, rules and other documents may be read to them. For individuals who cannot come to the civic center, some alternative

accommodation may be necessary. This could be completing the required task on the phone or by e-mail, allowing someone to act as the A/R's representative or arranging for someone to take a home application or re-certification.

XVII. Job seekers

In addition to the other obligations set out in this policy, for work experience clients, appropriate work place accommodations must be made to insure the A/R can participate in the JobsPlus program. In some cases, the proper accommodation is waiving the work experience requirement altogether for public assistance clients. In other cases, the accommodation may be to the work experience activity itself, such as part-time work activities, flexible schedules, frequent breaks, or work assignments that are consistent with a disabled individual's limitations. Onondaga County uses the VESID Lives program which, through a contract between OTDA and CNY Services, provides case management for those individuals who are working with VESID in order to get a job. Many of these individuals need accommodations, which VESID arranges, as well as case management to deal with the other aspects of their lives that interfere with getting/keeping a job. JobsPlus routinely refers jobseekers to this program and CNY Services outstations staff at this program on a weekly basis. For more information on accommodations for jobseekers, supervisors may contact Janice Mayne at 442-3242.

XVIII. Notice of ADA/504 rights

DSS staff must provide applicants, recipients, and members of the public with information about the ADA and Section 504. DSS staff must prominently display a large scale version of the ADA/504 Notice of Rights in waiting rooms at DSS and JobsPlus and other areas, such as reception areas, frequented by applicants and recipients of Social Services. [see attachment B Notice of Rights poster] DSS contractors shall be provided copies of notices for their offices and waiting areas. Individual copies of a Notice of Rights flyer must be available at these same locations and copies shall be accessible in baskets, shelves and other locations where client information is displayed.[see attachment A Notice of Rights flyer]

XIX. Staff training

All staff that interact with clients, including receptionists and security guards employed by DSS must be trained on the ADA and on this policy. This training will be done electronically on an annual basis. It is the responsibility of the ADA Coordinator to ensure that DSS staff receive this training. In addition live training sessions shall be conducted in cooperation with ARISE on a periodic basis. The training shall include, at minimum, the following topics:

1. General information about Title II of the ADA
- ±2. Detailed information about the Onondaga County DSS ADA policy
- ±3. Information about waiting room and reception area procedures

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XX . Best Practices

It is the policy of Onondaga County DSS to observe and incorporate best ADA practices both from within and outside the agency whenever possible. The TA intake program on the second floor Civic Center has adapted its procedures to better serve a growing disabled client population. Some of these adaptations include the following:

1. Assigning a specially trained employee to the reception area to address ADA issues as they arise
2. Assigning staff to assist disabled individuals in completing the application process where such an accommodation is appropriate
3. Creating a separate line and interview booth for disabled applicants who require this accommodation to better access services
4. Displaying ADA-related flyers and posters in a manner that makes them easily visible by and accessible to disabled individuals
5. Maintaining in the reception area readily available resource information about hearing, vision and language assistance
6. JobsPlus participated in two OTDA CAMS pilots over the course of several years. CAMS (Comprehensive Accommodations, Modifications, and Strategies) was designed to identify what accommodations jobseekers needed and to develop modifications on the job to increase their chances of success. These training materials may be available by contacting Janice Mayne at JobsPlus.

These ideas, to the extent transferable, shall provide the model for other DSS reception areas.

XXI. Disability screening/evaluations of cash assistance applicants and recipients

This provision (XXI) applies only to cash assistance applicants and recipients. Onondaga County eligibility staff providing cash assistance benefits shall use the attached screening tool [see exhibit D] to screen all cash assistance applicants to determine whether the applicant has a disability that affects the ability to engage in work or other social services activities, the type and amount of activities the individual can engage in, and the accommodations needed to engage in those activities. Applicants/recipients shall be informed that they have the right, but not obligation to disclose a disability. For applicant/recipients who disclose a disability or whose screening indicates a disability or possible disability that limits the ability to engage in work activities, a referral will be made to a medical professional for an evaluation to determine the type and degree of disability. JobsPlus administrators and staff have been trained in ADA procedures and will be provided additional training as needed.

If a screening or client disclosure indicates that the client has a physical, mental, or learning disability, the client must be given an opportunity to submit documentation of the disability to DSS. A client who declines to be screened and discloses a disability must be given an opportunity to submit documentation to establish the disability. Where necessary, DSS staff must help the client to get documents relevant to establishing a disability. If the screening

indicates that the client may have a disability, including a disability that has not yet been diagnosed, DSS must give the client an opportunity to get an evaluation from an appropriate professional. If an individual needs help in identifying an appropriate professional or making an appointment with the professional, DSS staff must provide this help.

Information obtained from screening and medical evaluations, either from a client's treating professional or from DSS's medical provider, must be used in establishing the employment plan. Information from the agency's medical providers may be used as well and may supersede that of the client's treating professional.

If an individual says she has a disability that limits her ability to engage in work activities, she cannot be assigned to a work activity until after the results of the evaluation are available, unless it is an activity that is consistent with the individual's claimed limitations or unless it is an activity in which the individual agrees to participate.

Information about a client's disabilities obtained by the employment services contractor must be made part of the client's file (with the client's consent) so that appropriate accommodations may be made by both the employment services contractor, work placement, and DSS.

If a cash assistance recipient has refused to be screened for disabilities and is unable to comply with work activities, DSS staff may offer the client an opportunity to be screened again prior to taking adverse action against the client. Any reasonable accommodations that were offered and refused should be offered again as well.

Effective Date: October 18, 2010

People with disabilities have rights!

Did you know?

If you have a health or mental health problem that makes it hard for you to:

- Apply for benefits
- Go to appointments
- Do other things you need to do to get benefits

you have a right to receive help from DSS. This help is called a reasonable accommodation.

To get this help, you must have a problem that limits what you can do. If you have:

- Depression or other mental health problems
- Problems with learning or memory
- Problems walking, sitting, standing
- Vision, hearing, and speech problems
- Asthma
- Cancer, diabetes, heart problems
- HIV/AIDS
- MS, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy
- Other health or mental health problems

You may be protected. If you have a condition that limits you, you may have a right to:

- Help from DSS with filling out an application and getting documents
- Change an appointment
- A meeting space at DSS that fits a wheelchair or other equipment
- Information in Braille, large print, or disc
- A sign language interpreter
- Part-time welfare work activities
- An exemption from welfare work activities

To get a reasonable accommodation, ask your worker or the receptionist.
If you ask for an accommodation and don't get it, you can file a grievance with the Onondaga DSS ADA Coordinator:

Paula Engel
Legal Department
Onondaga Department of Social Services
John L. Mulroy Civic Center
412 Montgomery Street – 12th Floor
315-435-2585 x 131
fax - 315-435-2113

You can contact Beata Karpinska-Prehn at ARISE at 635 James St., Syracuse NY 13203-2661, 315- 671-2929, TTY 479-6363 or Sally Johnston at Disabled in Action, 315-410-3317, for help with your grievance.

Attachment B

Do you have a disability and need help?

If you have a disability that makes it harder to do the things we ask you to do, please tell us. A disability is any health or mental problem that makes it hard to do things, including:

- Diseases (i.e. diabetes, heart disease, cancer, seizures, asthma)
- Limited ability to walk, stand, bend, or lift
- Vision, hearing or speech problems
- Breathing problems
- Depression or other mental health problems
- Developmental disabilities
- Learning disabilities

If you tell us you have a disability, we can:

- Help you to fill out forms
- Help you to get necessary documents
- Call or visit if you cannot come to our office
- Tell you what the letters we send mean
- Refer you to other services you need
- Help you to ask for a hearing
- Change program requirements

The Americans with Disabilities Act says that Onondaga DSS must help people with disabilities so they can get benefits. This type of help is called a reasonable accommodation. If you need a reasonable accommodation, tell us.

If you ask for a reasonable accommodation and you don't get it, you can file an ADA grievance with Paula Engel, the Onondaga DSS ADA Coordinator, at 315-435-2585 x 131. Ask your worker or Paula Engel for an ADA grievance form.

ADA GRIEVANCE FORM

NAME : _____

ADDRESS : _____

PHONE : _____ CASE NO. : _____

PROGRAM YOU ARE COMPLAINING ABOUT: (Circle One)

TANF FOOD STAMPS MEDICAID OTHER: _____

EXPLAIN YOUR GRIEVANCE: (Give any dates and names you can remember. Use extra pages if you need more space.)

TODAY'S DATE: _____

SIGNATURE

RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR CASEWORKER OR MAIL TO:

Paula Engel, ADA Compliance Officer
ONONDAGA COUNTY DSS LEGAL DIVISION
421 MONTGOMERY STREET, 12th floor
SYRACUSE, N Y 13202
435-2585 x 131

ADA Screening Tool

1. Do you have a mental or physical disability that affects your vision, hearing, speaking, learning or working?
2. Has your daily activity in any of these areas been limited because of such a disability or illness that has lasted more than 12 months.
3. Have you applied for or received SSI or SSD benefits?
4. Are you addicted to drugs or alcohol?
5. Do you receive home health care services or have a health attendant?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, explain how your disability precludes you from participating in DSS programs.

What accommodation or adjustment or help might allow you to participate in DSS programs?