



AmeriCorps

INCLUSION GUIDE

**An Introduction to the Inclusion
of People with Disabilities in
National and Community Service
Programs**

ServeRI
Commission for National and Community Service



RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education



AmeriCorps

Rhode Island

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Call to Inclusion for AmeriCorps and Volunteer Programs

Service brings people together, connecting individuals and organizations to help communities tackle their toughest challenges. To succeed at bringing people together, AmeriCorps service and community volunteer programs must be welcoming and inclusive of all participants. The culture of service rejects discrimination and actively seeks to create new relationships between people across race, age, gender, experience, ability and other differences.



The Disability Inclusion Guide is a starting point for learning about disability inclusion and intentional actions that all organizations should pursue to recognize and value the contributions of volunteers with different abilities. The following pages introduce organizations to practices for managing an inclusive volunteer program. AmeriCorps programs will also learn federal and ServeRI state commission requirements.

Here is the challenge: the influence of ableism surrounds each of us. Ableism is a set of beliefs or practices that devalues difference and discriminates against people with physical, mental, or intellectual disabilities. American culture in particular celebrates the individual who we perceive to achieve by merit - working harder, faster, and longer hours.

In its original slogan, "Getting Things Done," AmeriCorps celebrates the individual who takes more initiative, serves more volunteer hours, and completes more tasks. This manner of thinking can limit the potential of AmeriCorps and volunteer programs to bring more people into service and better serve communities. The truth is:

- Individuals with disabilities are ready to be recruited and contribute to your organization. By welcoming people with disabilities, you will discover a talent pool of qualified applicants.
- Employment research shows that individuals with disabilities are more reliable and committed to their organization.
- Individuals with disabilities offer their lived experience and innovative thinking to your program design and delivery of services to better serve clients and the community.

To confront ableism, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) identifies the practice of reasonable accommodations—modifying the activity, the environment, or recruitment process for individuals who disclose a disability. Over the last 25 years, ServeRI has provided training and technical assistance to make the practice of reasonable accommodations the habit of all AmeriCorps programs in Rhode Island. In fact, ServeRI, requires AmeriCorps programs to write procedures for providing reasonable accommodations.

Making an accommodation for an individual, however, is not enough to confront ableism. Our efforts need to go farther by designing programs that meet the needs of all participants. Rebekah Taussig, author of *Sitting Pretty*, identifies that "There's something unsettling about offering accommodations for an 'exceptional' body when the entire system surrounding that body is built on the assumption that more and faster and harder and higher is fundamentally, inherently superior." It is only an accommodation because we assume an able environment.

ServeRI challenges itself, AmeriCorps programs, and volunteer organizations to assess and improve disability inclusion practices and to welcome participants with different bodies and abilities. Please reflect on Ms. Taussig's observation and share with us how you address this potential for contradiction between our values and practices. In addition to supporting an individual AmeriCorps member or volunteer, your progress in managing an inclusive program supports the vision of an inclusive Rhode Island and America where all are afforded the same opportunities.

About ServeRI

“The mission of ServeRI is to catalyze inclusive, equitable service opportunities to strengthen Rhode Island.”

ServeRI, housed and supported by the Rhode Island Department of Education, awards AmeriCorps grants to organizations responding to local needs; builds capacity of volunteer programs and agencies through training and technical assistance; and promotes Rhode Islanders' commitment to volunteering and public service.

ServeRI identifies five principles that inspire our activities and guide our practices: leadership, collaboration, INCLUSION, equity and data. ServeRI's definition of inclusion is:

All individuals and communities have inherent dignity and local strengths to contribute. Achieving inclusion and cultural responsiveness requires empathy, intentional actions, and public input.

As ServeRI seeks to grow the number of individuals who apply to serve in AmeriCorps and volunteer in Rhode Island, the principle of inclusion guides the attention to intentional actions that all organizations can pursue to recognize and value the contributions of diverse volunteers.

About AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is a way for Americans to serve directly with nonprofit organizations and governments to tackle our nation's most pressing challenges. Volunteers, called AmeriCorps members, of all ages and backgrounds commit to a term of service ranging from 300 to 1,700 hours. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to pay for college or repay qualified student loans. AmeriCorps members can be community volunteers or individuals provided a modest living allowance and other benefits while serving. Programs are required to provide members training on their service activities, develop their sense of civic responsibility, and support their life goals after the term of service. AmeriCorps programs do more than move communities forward; they serve their members by providing pathways to education and careers.

The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 created AmeriCorps and the federal and state partnership to promote service and volunteerism by establishing state service commissions, like ServeRI. The legislation contains specific requirements to support individuals with disabilities to participate in AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps has a long history of directing funding and training to communities to create a culture of service that supports disability inclusion.

Disability Inclusion Guide Process

The Rhode Island State Service Plan, approved in February 2020 by the ServeRI Commission Board, directed ServeRI within three years to develop "a disability engagement plan" to support Rhode Islanders with disabilities to apply for AmeriCorps and community volunteer programs. After an initial exploration of disability inclusion in service programs in Rhode Island and AmeriCorps nationally, ServeRI decided to begin with publication of a Disability Inclusion Guide for AmeriCorps and volunteer program managers. ServeRI invited individuals with relevant expertise and experience to serve in an advisory capacity on this project.

The community advisors provided input on the initial outline and essential questions for the guide. ServeRI staff conducted a review of the extensive disability training materials created by AmeriCorps in past years, program guides from other state AmeriCorps programs, and the many websites listed in the resource section to draft this guide. The advisors then provided detailed and thorough feedback on the draft before the guide was finalized.

We are deeply grateful to the contributions of the following individuals:

Community Members

- Rory Carmody, MA, CRC, Director of Program Development, AccessPoint RI
- Lynn Corwin, Executive Advisor, Strategic Initiatives, United Way of RI
- Deanne Gagne, Peer Navigator, Perspectives Corporation
- David Goldman, Program Manager for Diversity Compliance, Lifespan
- Amy Grattan, PhD, Executive Director, Paul V. Sherlock Center
- Andrew McQuaide, Individual and Family Supports Coordinator, Paul V. Sherlock Center
- Arthur Plitt, member, Rhode Island Commission for National and Community Service
- Kristin Read, Director of Education, Providence Children's Museum
- Jane Slade, Education Specialist, Rhode Island Department of Education
- Andrew Whalen, Chair, Rhode Island's Employment First Task Force

ServeRI Staff and Consultants

- Adam Donaldson, National and Community Service Program Specialist
- Amanda Forget, National and Community Service Program Associate
- Cathy Saunders, Program Development and Training Consultant

ServeRI Disability Inclusion Requirements

Nondiscrimination

An individual with responsibility for a project that receives AmeriCorps assistance, including the state commission and its subgrantees, must not discriminate against a participant in, or member of the staff of, such project on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, genetic information or military service.

State Commission Board

The Commission Board must represent the demographics of Rhode Island and make an effort to be diverse with respect to race, ethnicity, age, gender, and disability.

ServeRI Subgrantee Requirements

1. ServeRI subgrantees must include information on civil rights requirements, complaint procedures and the rights of beneficiaries in member or volunteer service agreements.

ServeRI updates annually a Member Service Agreement template with a required statement and contact information for the AmeriCorps Equal Employment Opportunity Office. Member Service Agreement statement:

"Any benefits and terms and conditions of this program are available to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, genetic information and military service. [Grantee's name] policy and federal law prohibits reprisal for engaging in protected activity (reporting discrimination or harassment, participating in investigations of such allegations, or intervening to assist those who are subjected to prohibited behaviors), and it will not be tolerated. In addition to filing a complaint with local and state agencies that are responsible for resolving discrimination complaints, you may bring a complaint to the attention of the Corporation for National and Community Service. If you believe that you or others have been discriminated against, or if you want to seek advice, contact:

(Name, address, phone number – both voice and TTY, and preferably toll free – FAX number and email address of the recipient) or Equal Employment Opportunity Office (EEO)
Corporation for National and Community Service
250 E Street, SW Washington, DC 20525
(202) 606-7503 or eo@cns.gov "

2. ServeRI subgrantees must notify the public in recruitment material and application forms that it operates its program or activity subject to the nondiscrimination requirements. Sample language is: This program is available to all, without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, genetic information and military service.

3. ServeRI subgrantees are required to provide reasonable accommodation to AmeriCorps applicants, members, and managed volunteers and to have a written reasonable accommodations policy and procedure that includes minimally:

- Procedure for disclosure and consideration of accommodation requests
- Orientation and training procedure to inform AmeriCorps members of the reasonable accommodations process.

4. ServeRI subgrantees are strongly encouraged to provide staff who participate in the recruitment, selection, and supervision of AmeriCorps members annual training in disability.

5. ServeRI subgrantees may be asked to report to the state commission on their efforts to conduct outreach activities to individuals with disabilities to recruit them for participation in AmeriCorps programs and on the number of AmeriCorps members who receive reasonable accommodations.



AmeriCorps

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

Under federal law, AmeriCorps programs are obligated to ensure non-discriminatory environments and practices and procedures for qualified persons with disabilities. ServeRI subgrantee requirements serve this purpose.

What is a Disability?

ServeRI manages AmeriCorps, a federal program, and therefore relies on the federal definition of a disability when providing guidance and carrying out its responsibilities. A person with a disability is one who:

- has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or
- has a history of such an impairment; or
- is perceived or “regarded as” having such an impairment, even when the impairment does not exist.

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

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 states that " no otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States...shall, solely by reason of [her or] his disability, be excluded for the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...". AmeriCorps regulation 45 CFR Part 1232 interpret Section 504, including the need for accessible facilities and reasonable accommodations.

American Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

Organizations may be subject to the ADA, but ADA compliance is not a condition of receiving funding from AmeriCorps or ServeRI.

PART 2: PREPARING YOUR ORGANIZATION

Individuals with disabilities frequently encounter barriers to joining AmeriCorps and volunteering with nonprofit organizations. In addition to physical accessibility, individuals find communication challenges and attitudes that do not feel welcoming to all individuals.

Through intentional preparation, you can reduce these barriers and create a more inclusive organization. This section lays out a three-step approach to preparing your organization for welcoming individuals with disabilities to service:

1. **Assess** how prepared your organization, program, and service sites are to include AmeriCorps members and volunteers with disabilities.
2. **Help** staff develop awareness of disability and use disability inclusion practices.
3. **Look** for ways to improve the design of the service assignment so that it is better for all volunteers, including individuals with disabilities.

START HERE:

As you go through this section, do a quick assessment.

- What does your organization do well? It is important to take time to document what is in place.
- What do staff need to learn more about? Throughout this guide there will be resources suggested that may help you fill in knowledge gaps.
- What are areas for improvement before your organization actively recruits people with disabilities? Regardless of limited time and resources, everyone can do something to make strides toward inclusion of service members with disabilities.

Assessing Organizational Preparedness

Making changes to practices, procedures, and organizational culture can be both exciting and hard. It is important to understand your starting place. Your organization probably does some things well and could use improvement in other areas. That is okay. Knowing where you are allows you to choose the next steps to take. Also, any new initiatives or changes are more



likely to succeed if they are embraced by all levels of the organization and project. The key places to assess are staff knowledge and attitudes, public and internal communications, and architectural, or physical, accessibility.

Staff Knowledge

Have you committed to supporting staff with disability awareness training?

Assess whether the staff in your organization's leadership and key positions who might work with AmeriCorps members and volunteers with disabilities:

- Recognize the importance of making all people feel welcome, including individuals with disabilities;
- Have the opportunity to discuss attitudinal barriers to welcoming people with disabilities within your organization;
- Understand and practice disability awareness and person-first language;
- Understand that people with disabilities have the same rights as anyone else to access the program and become AmeriCorps members or volunteers;
- Understand that services, programs, and facilities must be readily accessible;
- Understand that services and programs should be delivered in a setting that is fully integrated (meaning that AmeriCorps members and volunteers with disabilities serve alongside members and volunteers who are not disabled); and
- Know your organization's policies and procedures for:
 - welcoming people with disabilities;
 - non-discriminatory recruitment, interviewing, and selection;
 - reasonable accommodations; and
 - AmeriCorps grievance resolution.

Communications

Do you have practices in place that promote clear communication with staff, AmeriCorps applicants, and volunteers?

- Do your promotional materials include visual representation and information about members or volunteers with disabilities?
- Are communications available in alternative formats (consider verbal, written, digital, print, braille, American Sign Language, and language translation)?
- Is your website built to accessibility standards for people who use assistive software?
- Have you revised procedures, such as sick call outs or fire drills, to accommodate the communication needs of your staff and volunteers?

Architectural Accessibility

Have you assessed your facility and service sites for compliance with physical access standards?

- Is there clear signage for travel between places, such as parking lots to the main entrance or the elevator to the office location?
- Have you moved through your facility to check doorways, hallways, restrooms and other areas for access barriers (see ADA checklist in “Resources” below)?
- Do you have a budget for or know how to acquire equipment or technology that could assist a volunteer with a disability complete their assignment?

RESOURCES:

US DHHS Fact Sheet on the Americans with Disabilities Act

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr/civilrights/resources/factsheets/ada.pdf>

US DHHS Fact Sheet on Section 504

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr/civilrights/resources/factsheets/504.pdf>

ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities

<https://www.adachecklist.org/checklist.html>

Disability Awareness

START HERE:

As you go through this section, do a quick assessment.

- Does your organization provide disability training to staff?
- Are training opportunities annual or more frequent for AmeriCorps members and volunteers? (Training can be specific to your organization or from opportunities provided by outside resources).
- Have you considered how to include the voices of people with disabilities in your training? (You may want to look outside your organization for these voices, so that people within your organization are not expected to speak for all people with disabilities).

How Western society views and treats people with disabilities has changed over time. For most of history, society systematically marginalized people with disabilities by identifying them as the problem, “broken,” and in need of medical treatment or charity. This history of exclusion must be acknowledged and abandoned as you develop your disability awareness. More recent activism by people with disabilities led to a shift in perspective from a medical model to one that views disability as an identity deserving of legal protections and full participation in society’s activities. Using this social model of disability lens, the following tips can be helpful in creating a welcoming environment.

In General:

- Listen to people with disabilities; they are the experts on their experience. There is no one perfect approach for all people:
 - Listen to what the individual wants; be open to cues given that will help you build mutual understanding. Do not assume what they can and cannot do. Ask.
 - Listen to how a person wants you to talk, or not talk, about their disability and any accommodations they may suggest.
 - Have people with disabilities involved in helping you develop your disability training and accessibility plans. People with disabilities have important first-person insights to share.

- Treat adults as adults (e.g., use a normal tone of voice when speaking).
- It is okay to offer help; always ask first before giving assistance. Some people do not want or need help. Be ready to accept “no” to your offer.
- Use person-first language as your default (see page 15).
- Respect confidentiality:
 - Do not disclose someone’s disability without their permission.
 - There are times when supervising an individual you may need to ask about someone’s ability when you are asking about a task (e.g., “Are you able to open that door?”), and that is okay. But you should not ask about the specifics of a disability except in prescribed circumstances.
 - See Confidentiality and Disclosure on page 31 for more information.
- Do not assume someone is not a person with a disability because you do not see their disability. Many people have “hidden” or “invisible” disabilities.
- Fear. 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.

“No two people are alike. People with disabilities are just as different from each other as so-called typical people.”
-input provided by community member

Interacting with people who have some difficulty with direct eye contact, verbal communication and/or social interactions:

- Do not assume that just because the person is not looking at you they are not listening.
- Give the individual the option to talk at an alternate time; provide advance notice of meeting times and dates.
- Provide advance notice of topics to be discussed.
- When possible allow for written responses.

Interacting with people with wheelchairs, aids, or service animals:

- Speak to the person, not their companion or interpreter.
- Never pet a person’s service animal without getting permission first.
- Never lean on a person's wheelchair or other assistive device.

Interacting with people who are hard of hearing or low vision:

- Face a person who is hard-of-hearing or deaf when speaking with them. If there is an interpreter with the person, still address the person you are talking to (not the interpreter).
- Announce yourself to a person who is low vision or blind.

Person-first Language

Person-first language emphasizes the person rather than their condition. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was crafted using person-first language and RI state law also mandates the use of person-first language in state statutes and legislation. The disability community largely celebrates the growing use of person-first language.

Person-first Affirmative Phrases	Outdated - Negative Phrases
Person with an intellectual, cognitive, or developmental disability	Crazy Retarded Mentally defective
Person who is blind Person who is visually impaired	The blind
Person with a disability	The disabled Handicapped
Person who is deaf or hard of hearing	The deaf (see note about identity first language on the next page)
Person who uses a wheelchair	Wheelchair bound Confined to a wheelchair
Person who is receiving mental health services	Mental Health patient/case Crazy
Person who is successful, productive	Has overcome his/her disability Is courageous (when it implies the person has courage because of having a disability)

Identity-first Language

Some individuals prefer identity-first language. The choice to identify with the disability, or a health condition, comes from a place of empowerment; it is a statement that there is nothing missing. It is increasingly used by deaf persons and autistic persons advocacy groups. How a person chooses to self-identify is up to them.

If you are not a member of a group, you should always err on the side of using person-first language. Be aware that there are different ways of communicating. Remember, when in doubt, ask.

RESOURCES:

Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN) Training: Disability and Effective Communications <https://askearn.org/training-center/training/earn-training-disability-and-effective-communications/>

Person First Language Handout in English and Spanish
<http://onestarfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/People-First-Language-Handout-english-and-spanish.pdf>

RI State Law: § 43-3-7.1. Use of appropriate disability language
<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE43/43-3/43-3-7.1.HTM>



Universal Design

By improving the design of the service placement, or volunteer role, you can improve the service for a wide range of people and reduce the need to make specialized accommodations. This concept is called universal design, or universal design thinking. Universal design asks you to examine how your management practices, program policies, and physical accessibility can be changed to welcome and benefit any volunteer. The term universal design was first coined by architect, product designer, and educator Ronald Mace.

“Universal Design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.”

– Ron Mace, The Center for Universal Design founder

Universal Design in Practice in the Service Placement

On the following page are some suggestions for things that can be done to optimize service placement conditions for all members and volunteers regardless of ability or disability.

Low cost/ effort examples:

- Clarity and repetition of instructions, (e.g., verbal and written, written with images, written in multiple places, and captioned videos)
- Avoiding clichés and jargon
- In meetings: providing an agenda; limiting cross-talk
- Giving regular feedback (This lets a service member know how they are doing, and it lets the supervisor be aware of support a member may need)
- Allowing for flexible schedules and deadlines when possible
- During online meetings making the closed caption transcription available
- Providing recordings of trainings that members can watch at their own pace (If loaded on YouTube, captions can be added and playback speed can be adjusted)
- Clearing pathways of clutter and obstacles
- Labeling and identifying supplies and resources—both physical and on server/drives
- Providing the option of carrying, pushing, pulling, or rolling for storage containers
- Designating break areas that are quiet and comfortable to allow volunteers and members a place to recover from work demands and socialize with others
- Options of workspaces (Does the work have to be completed at one specific location?)

Medium cost/effort examples:

- Comfortable reaching zones for equipment, controls, and supplies
- Height adjustable work surfaces and/or workstations that accommodate both standing and seated positions
- Adjusting light levels at their workspaces to best fit the requirements for their specific tasks, individual abilities, and preferences
- Adjusting or modifying training materials or policies

Eight Goals of Universal Design

Universal Design is "a design process that enables and empowers a diverse population by improving human performance, health and wellness, and social participation" (Edward Steinfeld and Jordana Maisel, 2012).

1. **Body fit.** Accommodating a wide range of body sizes and abilities
2. **Comfort.** Keeping demands within desirable limits of body function
3. **Awareness.** Insuring that critical information for use is easily perceived
4. **Understanding.** Making methods of operation and use intuitive, clear, and unambiguous
5. **Wellness.** Contributing to health promotion, avoidance of disease, and prevention of injury
6. **Social integration.** Treating all groups with dignity and respect
7. **Personalization.** Incorporating opportunities for choice and the expression of individual preferences
8. **Cultural appropriateness.** Respecting and reinforcing cultural values and the social, economic and environmental context of any design project.

Source: <http://www.buffalo.edu/access/help-and-support/topic3/GoalsOfUniversalDesign.html>

RESOURCES:

What is Universal Design?

<http://idea.ap.buffalo.edu/about/universal-design/>

CAST Online Courses on Universal Design for Learning <https://www.cast.org/products-services/institutes-online-courses>

How to Make Your Presentations Accessible to All

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/teach-advocate/accessible-presentations/#basics-for-organizers--speakers>

PART 3: INCLUSIVE SERVICE PRACTICES

There are a number of practices common to AmeriCorps and volunteer programs that can be continually improved for disability inclusion. ServeRI encourages programs to choose where to start based on their organizational reflection and growing disability awareness. Part 3: Inclusive Practices does not need to be read in "page order", but is intended to explore these practices:

- Position Descriptions
- Reasonable Accommodations
- Supervision
- Recruitment Strategies
- Interviewing



Position Descriptions

START HERE:

As you go through this section, do a quick assessment.

- Are essential and marginal functions of your position descriptions up-to-date?
- Are there changes to the existing position descriptions that would make them more accurately reflect what you are asking AmeriCorps members and volunteers to do?
- What additional changes would you consider making to your position descriptions to make them more inclusive to a wider group of people?
- How can the lens of Universal Design assist you in making changes to the service environment so that your positions are more inclusive?

Written position descriptions are as essential to volunteer recruitment and management as they are to hiring and managing employees. By making the effort to refine a position description for inclusion, AmeriCorps and volunteer programs attract a diverse applicant pool and ensure people with disabilities do not feel excluded from applying for a position. Programs can use position descriptions to match applicants with positions during the recruitment and selection process, and supervisors will refer to descriptions for reasonable accommodation requests and other management decisions.

Inclusive AmeriCorps or volunteer position descriptions clearly communicate the expectations and requirements to successfully perform the assignment. The best position descriptions deliver a preview to the experience of being in the role. Continue reading for ways to make position descriptions more inclusive.

Essential and Non-Essential Functions

Inclusive position descriptions outline the "Essential Functions" and "Marginal Functions" of each position.

Essential Functions:

Every position should have tasks and duties delineated into "essential" and "marginal" (or "non-essential"). The essential functions are the universal requirements of the position; all individuals in the position must be able to perform them, with or without reasonable accommodation.

According to the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission), three factors make a function essential:

- the position exists to perform a specific function;
- there are a limited number of employees (or in this case members/volunteers) available to perform the function or among whom the performance of the function can be distributed; and
- a function is highly specialized and the person is selected for expertise or ability to perform the function.

Non-Essential (or Marginal) Functions:

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. (The terms "non-essential" and "marginal" may be used interchangeably).

Being clear about requirements, expectations, and conditions from the outset will help set AmeriCorps members and volunteers up for success and prevent difficult conversations (and decisions) in the future.

When identifying essential vs. marginal 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.
- Consider what needs to be done rather than how it needs to be done.
 - 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.

In supervising people with disabilities, it may be necessary to reassign or trade marginal functions among AmeriCorps members or volunteers within a given service site. This would be done so that one person receives the marginal functions that a member with a disability was not able to perform. In turn, the member with a disability would receive marginal functions which they could perform. This would be considered a reasonable accommodation.

Physical Demands and Other Challenges of the Position

Take a proactive approach to describe the physical demands and other challenges AmeriCorps members and volunteers typically face in both the position description and the welcome materials. These are often assumed or overlooked in position descriptions. Providing a realistic picture of the service experience helps candidates make informed decisions about whether or not the position is a fit for their needs. This also can facilitate realistic reasonable accommodation requests.

Identifying the physical demands and environmental conditions may also help a person with a disability to initiate a request for an accommodation.

Things to consider:

- What conditions are required for task completion? Conditions include environmental (hot/cold, inside/outside, noise level, lighting, ventilation, etc.)
- What are the necessary physical and mental requirements needed to accomplish the job? Think about inclusive language—instead of “must be able to walk between buildings” could you say, “must be able to travel between buildings”?

Identify the obvious and less-obvious physical demands of a position:

- Consider what you need your members to do during the course of their service:
 - lifting—including weight and frequency of such lifting,
 - hours per day to be spent standing, sitting or walking, and
 - hours per day spent doing a task.
 - Then consider if those physical demands are essential or marginal, and could be covered by other members of the team if needed.

Consider the setting of the service position:

- Are the conditions or location where the essential functions are performed ADA compliant and accessible to people of all abilities?
 - If not, can barriers be removed to bring it into compliance or could you change the setting? (See section III.2.c. Planning for Universal Design and Accommodations in Service Placements)
- What environmental factors can you describe in your position description?
 - This kind of information can help set expectations for new service members. For example, noting if the work area is busy and noisy or quiet and isolated.

Examine the schedule and location requirements:

The preferred schedule and number of hours worked per week should be stated explicitly. If there is an option for flexibility, a statement to that effect could be included. Flexible hours can be helpful for some members with disabilities.

For example, some people with disabilities may need more time to get to a service location (e.g., they might be reliant on RIPTA's Ride Program); need more time to get ready in the morning; have medical appointments during normal service hours; or find extended days to be taxing.

Describe whether the member is expected to report to a specific location, or if working from an alternative location or remotely is an option.

Give Prospective Members a Preview of the Position:

Once the position is finalized, consider alternative ways to give prospective members a preview of what the service position responsibilities will be—e.g., photos, or a “day in the life” video.

Non Discrimination Language

All AmeriCorps position descriptions should include the following language:

"Any benefits and terms and conditions of this program are available to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, genetic information and military service."

Community volunteer programs should consider expressing their commitment to nondiscrimination.

RESOURCES:

Job Accommodation Network: Formulating a Job Description

<https://askjan.org/topics/jobdesc.cfm#spy-scroll-heading-8>

Job Accommodation Network: Identifying the Essential Functions of a Job

<https://askjan.org/publications/ada-specific/Technical-Assistance-Manual-for-Title-I-of-the-ADA.cfm#spy-scroll-heading-29>

University of Idaho: Determining Essential & Marginal Job Functions

<https://www.uidaho.edu/-/media/UIdaho-Responsive/Files/human-resources/forms/classification-and-compensation/classification/essential-marginal-job-functions.pdf>

Realistic Job Previews

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/other-assessment-methods/realistic-job-previews/>

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

<http://onestarfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Section-3-Inclusive-Service-Descriptions.pdf>

Realistic Job Previews

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/other-assessment-methods/realistic-job-previews/>

Creating New or Different Positions

Another strategy for making your program more inclusive is to develop new positions within your program that may be more accessible to a broader group of people. Examine your overall program design and consider what needs to be done rather than how it needs to be done. Could the same program be implemented with reduced hour positions or positions with segmented functions?



- **Reduced hours.** Create some part-time positions in the program where the number of hours required to serve per day is shorter.
 - Recruiting for part-time AmeriCorps members or volunteers could draw new qualified applicants who might not have been interested in serving full-time—including people with disabilities. If your program has typically only offered full-time positions (+35 hours/week), could you redesign your program so that some of those positions are part-time? For AmeriCorps programs, there are different Terms of Service, or slots, measured by total service hours that range from 300 to 1700 hours. When you are planning a new or continuing grant application, you could consider a mix of slot types.
 - Sometimes you might have an applicant who is interested in serving as an AmeriCorps member but only if they can serve fewer hours than you planned in your program design. If this is a reasonable accommodation that will work for your program, you can contact ServeRI to request a “slot conversion.”
- **Segmenting functions.** Create some positions in which the essential functions are more narrow in focus. For example, if a current position requires a tutoring in the classroom as well as leading outdoor recreational activities, it may limit the number of qualified applicants. Splitting those essential duties into two separate positions may allow for people with a wider range of abilities to serve.

Reasonable Accommodations

No matter how well planned your service experience is, there will be times that you need to make reasonable accommodations for a person with a disability. An accommodation is any change in the service environment, or in the way things are customarily done, that allows an individual with a disability to enjoy equal service opportunities.

Making reasonable accommodations is a form of non-discrimination. Reasonable accommodations enhance the opportunity for qualified people, who may not otherwise be considered for reasons unrelated to actual service requirements, to be or remain in service. Accommodations are considered “reasonable” if they do not create an undue hardship; undue hardship means that the accommodation would require significant difficulty or expense.

AmeriCorps and volunteer managers can sometimes confuse “reasonable accommodations” with simply being flexible with an individual whom they supervise. There are any number of situations where one modifies a plan based on a new discovery, personal preference, changes to the environment, illness, or a need for support. Remember that reasonable accommodations is a process for addressing barriers for individuals who disclose a disability.

Under Title I of the ADA, reasonable accommodation is required in three areas:

1. Application process
2. Essential functions of a job (or position description), and
3. Benefits and privileges



Streamline Your Reasonable Accommodations Procedures

Having policies and procedures in place to respond to and implement reasonable accommodations in your organization and your program is critical. Written policies and procedures are a safeguard for consistency in how reasonable accommodations are implemented.

When writing reasonable accommodations policies and procedures:

- Decide who on staff will be designated to handle reasonable accommodations.
 - These people should be familiar with the JAN (the Job Accommodation Network) resources, in particular, the Technical Assistance Manual for Title I of the ADA.
- Have a procedure for submitting a request and collecting appropriate documentation.
- Ensure that supervisors and hiring managers are knowledgeable about:
 - the accommodation request policy.
 - how to identify accommodation requests, even when individuals do not use specific terms like “disability” or “accommodation” to identify their need for support, and
 - confidentiality requirements of disclosure.
- Inform AmeriCorps members and volunteers about reasonable accommodation policies in multiple ways. Some people may not be aware that reasonable accommodations apply to them and so will need multiple reminders.
 - At a minimum, inform individuals during application processes and orientation.
 - Consider adding reasonable accommodation policies to a checklist during a feedback cycle or to training quarterly agendas.
- Go back and review your assessment of the accessibility of your facility. Modifications may be needed to provide equal access to lunchrooms, employee lounges, restrooms, or meeting rooms. Do not forget to include special events, transportation, and other service projects.
- Develop a plan for monitoring the effectiveness of an accommodation after implementation.
- Develop a system where you limit the number of people that have access to confidential information. Also, the fewer people you have making decisions, the easier it is to ensure consistency in implementation.

Common Requests for reasonable accommodations include:

Modifications to the application process:

- Provide alternative formats of a service application such as large print or electronic versions, or
- Provide an accessible location to ensure an applicant with a disability can apply for the service position if they wish to do so.

Modifications or adjustments to service:

- Flexible scheduling
- Volunteering from home
- Restructuring positions to be part time
- Reassignment of a person or duties or a change in service site
- Shifting marginal functions among members
- Modifications to how a task is done, color-coding work tasks/sequences, or breaking tasks into small steps
- Daily work task list
- Minimizing distractions in the workplace, e.g., use of headphones/background music/ear plugs
- Adjustments to lighting: less direct, softer, no buzzing
- Allowing a service animal in the workplace
- Providing a mentor
- Providing specialized equipment
- Assistive devices:
 - Voice dictation software (e.g., Google Assist, Naturally Speaking Dragon, and other apps)
 - Teletypewriter (TTY) or telephone amplifier
 - Wooden blocks to elevate desks and tables
 - Screen reader or large-type computer terminals
- Consider allowing a support professional (provided by an external agency) to work with a member in the service setting.

Reasonable Accommodations in Practice

After you have made a selection and offered someone a position, you may discuss reasonable accommodations. (A reasonable accommodation is a request to change a program's policies, so long as it doesn't change the nature of the position). This section introduces an interactive process for handling accommodation requests.

JAN (The Job Accommodation Network) recommends a six step interactive process to accommodation requests for essential functions of a position <https://askjan.org/topics/interactive.cfm>; you may also consider providing accommodations for marginal functions.

Step 1: Recognize Request

Sometimes an individual will make a very specific request for accommodations. However, an individual may also use "plain English" and need not mention the ADA or use the phrase "reasonable accommodation" when requesting an accommodation.

Any time a person indicates that they are having a problem and the problem is related to a medical condition, you should consider whether this could be a request for accommodation under the ADA. You are entitled to collect medical documentation from any person with a non-apparent disability, but only ask what is absolutely necessary. Use your reasonable accommodations policy and procedures as a guide to ensure consistency in implementation.

Step 2: Gather Information

Ask the person for information. Find out the limitations as they relate to the essential functions of the position.

Step 3: Explore Accommodation Options

Invite the person to suggest accommodations. Explore JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) system <https://askjan.org/soar.cfm> for ideas.

Step 4: Choose Accommodation

Consider the member's preference if there are options.

Step 5: Implement Accommodations

Make sure all necessary steps are taken to implement the accommodation. Communicate with essential personnel about the accommodation. (Remember ADA confidentiality rules and only let managers and supervisors know about the accommodation if necessary).

Step 6: Monitor Accommodations

Monitor the accommodation. Document your efforts to show your due diligence and to help you evaluate effectiveness.

RESOURCES:

JAN Accommodation and Compliance: Interactive Process

<https://askjan.org/topics/interactive.cfm>

JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) system

<https://askjan.org/soar.cfm>

JAN: Requests For Medical Documentation and the ADA

<https://askjan.org/articles/Requests-For-Medical-Documentation-and-the-ADA.cfm>

ADA Network's Reasonable Accommodations in the Workplace Fact Sheet (available in large print and Spanish as well)

<https://adata.org/factsheet/reasonable-accommodations-workplace>

Five Practical Tips For Providing and Maintaining Effective Reasonable Accommodations

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LzQIG7-dU9p-yBouRjD-2exJjBaRyqsT/view?usp=sharing>

JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) system

<https://askjan.org/soar.cfm>

Confidentiality Considerations

Employers and AmeriCorps programs are required by the ADA to keep disability and medical information confidential and to give it to managers and supervisors only on a need-to-know basis.

- All information related to an individual's disability (including medical records and accommodations) must be kept in a secure file, separate from all other records.
- 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.
 - While it may feel awkward, there are times when others ask about someone's accommodation and you are restricted in what you can say. Two suggested options are:
 - "I am unable to discuss that with you; that is a personnel issue that is between me and the member/volunteer."
 - "We treat each person individually and make considerations based upon good programmatic reasons which allows for privacy of each individual."
- Remember, only share information with those who need to know. This should not include co-members/peers.
- If a member provides approval in writing, or alternative verifiable method, then you may share information regarding disabilities.
- You may want to have a private discussion with the member about how they would like to respond to peers/co-members when people question them about accommodations.

Disclosure Considerations

For the Member/Volunteer:

Only the person with a disability can decide whether or not he or she wants to disclose his or her disability or any other sensitive information to others. There are both advantages and disadvantages associated with the decision to disclose. On the one hand, disability disclosure can open up opportunities for a person with a disability to participate in activities that they may have avoided or been unable to participate in and help put supports in place. On the other hand, fear of stigma and discrimination is very real for many people with disabilities.

For the Employer/AmeriCorps Program:

The member is the only one who can initiate the disability status conversation, and the amount of information provided about a disability is also up to the individual. You should not approach a member who has not disclosed their disability and ask if they have one. Disability inquiries may not be made prior to making an applicant an offer to an AmeriCorps or volunteer position.

When a member has disclosed a disability or medical issue, the diagnosis is less important than information about how the disability affects their capacity to learn and perform effectively.



Inclusive Supervision

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.

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.

The basic needs of people with disabilities are the same as anyone in service. They want to feel that:

- there are challenges and opportunities for growth;
- they have a sense of belonging and being part of a team; and
- there is good communication.

Your responsibilities supervising members with disabilities include:

- maintaining an inclusive service environment and providing appropriate accommodations;
- developing clear position descriptions that outline tasks, essential functions, and expectations;
- holding participants with disabilities to the same levels of accountability as others (e.g., if you expect members to arrive on time, have that same expectation of members with disabilities. Even if you have adjusted hours as an accommodation, expect them to arrive at their adjusted arrival time);
- keeping the lines of communication clear and open; and
- taking action when you see that a participant is not participating. They may be an indication that they need supports.

Encourage participants who receive disability benefits 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.

Inclusive Recruitment Strategies

When you know that your organization is committed to creating a welcoming environment, it will still take time and an intentional plan to conduct AmeriCorps or volunteer recruitment for disability inclusion. The creation of inclusive position descriptions and written procedures for reasonable accommodations are a great start. You will also want to provide training to staff and supporters involved in recruitment to prepare them to welcome people with disabilities, conduct selection interviews, and respond to accommodation requests.

It is helpful to think of developing your recruitment plan as a multi-year project in three phases:

Phase 1- The first phase begins with short-term, more easily-implemented strategies, focused on making what you already do more inclusive and accessible.

Phase 2- From there you can work up to mid-term strategies that build bridges in the disability community.

Phase 3- Finally you can progress to long-term strategies to deepen relationships and connectivity with the disability community.



Phase 1

Inclusive & Accessible Recruiting (Short-Term Strategies)

Make inclusive recruitment part of your master plan for recruiting new AmeriCorps members and volunteers, rather than an extra step.

Remember things that benefit people with disabilities will likely benefit many others as well. Some things to consider:

- Create promotional materials that are inclusive in content and language:
 - Let applicants know that you welcome people with disabilities with a statement such as: “Qualified individuals with disabilities and those from diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply. We provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals and conduct all activities in fully accessible settings.”
 - Include images of people with disabilities who participate as active service members and volunteers in your brochures, videos, and other materials.
 - Offer alternative formats of recruitment materials to ensure your materials can be accessed by individuals using different modalities and methods.
 - Provide alt text (alternative text), code to describe the appearance and function of images on web pages or social media.
- Ensure that the recruitment process is accessible to all individuals by providing reasonable accommodations for the application and interview process:
 - Your application should offer information about how potential applicants can get assistance with the application, for example stating, “If you need assistance with the application email xyz.” Assistance or accommodations in the application process could include things such as:
 - Applications in alternative formats. Online application systems can be inaccessible to some people with disabilities. Common alternative formats include large print or electronic versions.
 - Providing an accessible route-of-travel to the interview space.

Review the section on “Inclusive Interviewing” on page 37 for more information.

Phase 2

Building Bridges into the Disability Community (Mid-Term Strategies)

As your program and organization build competence in recruiting, welcoming, and retaining members with disabilities, consider conducting specific outreach activities with communities of persons with disabilities and organizations that serve these communities.

There are many types of organizations to conduct outreach with: college accommodation centers for students with disabilities, state and local vocational rehabilitation agencies, independent living centers, or membership-based disability organizations. See the local resources section in the back of this guide for some ideas.

Of course, there are organizations that may be willing to partner with you at any stage of your disability inclusion journey. The more you reach out the more you will learn.

Phase 3

Creating Connectivity & Deepening Relationships (Long-Term Strategies)

Eventually your program may work up to developing a “pipeline” relationship with one or more disability organizations. There are disability organizations that may be interested in partnering in recruitment—having a presence at their fairs and holding information sessions and networking with their constituents and staff.

If your organization/program increases employment services to people with disabilities, you could consider becoming a Social Security “Employment Network” in the Ticket to Work Program, <https://yourtickettowork.ssa.gov/employment-networks/becoming-an-en.html>.

RESOURCES:

US Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy on Recruiting & Retaining
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers>

Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN): Recruitment & Hiring
<https://askearn.org/topics/recruitment-hiring/>

Inclusive Interviewing

Interviews can be stressful. The first step is to relax, then help the applicant feel relaxed, and treat all applicants with the same level of respect.

When interviewing, focus on what an individual can contribute to his or her community through service and what the program can bring to the individual. You do this by focusing on questions regarding the ability of an applicant to perform the essential functions of the position with or without accommodations. As with any interviews complying with best practice, it is important to ask all applicants the same questions. (Even when someone's disability is obvious to the interviewer, the questions asked and process followed must treat that candidate equally to all others, with no mention of the condition).

General Interviewing Tips:

- Create a culture which welcomes and values people with disabilities and is accepting of individual differences.
- Be sure that all staff involved in the interview process are properly trained.
- Ask (and document) the same questions of everyone; this is a key to avoiding discrimination.
- Consider including a test in which applicants have to perform actual or simulated tasks. Remember, all applicants need to be asked to do the same thing. Inform the applicant they will be taking a test in advance so that they have an opportunity to request a reasonable accommodation.
- If accommodations are requested for the interview, ask the individual questions for more detailed information for WHAT accommodations are needed for the interview (but not why the accommodations are needed). For example, you can ask, "I'll need to ask what accommodation(s) you require for the interview, so we can determine how best to address it (them). Please know that your request in no way will impact your application or your candidacy for the applied position(s)."

If someone discloses a disability during the interview:

- Offer the availability of and process for acquiring accommodations.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Only discuss the specifics of a disability accommodation after offering the person an opportunity to serve. You might say, "Thank you for telling me. Certainly there will be a discussion, post offer, about how this might impact your ability to perform the duties and whether reasonable accommodations may be needed."

Do not speculate or make judgments regarding how a person's disability might impact job performance.

Listed below are examples of some questions that are appropriate to ask, as well as questions that should not be asked during an interview.

Okay to Ask	Do NOT Ask
<p style="text-align: center;">GENERAL QUESTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why are you interested in this position?• Tell me about your interests.• What do you see yourself doing in 5 years?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe any physical or mental disabilities you have.• Have you ever sought treatment for a mental illness?• Have you ever received Workers' Compensation, SSDI, or SSI?• Are you currently taking any prescribed medications?
<p style="text-align: center;">QUESTIONS ABOUT ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You've received a copy of the position description, is there anything about the schedule or requirements that causes you concern?• 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you need reasonable accommodations to perform the essential functions of this job?• How many days were you absent from your previous job for any reason, other than approved vacation leave?• How many days were you absent from your previous job due to illness?

RESOURCES:

Focus on Ability: Interviewing Applicants with Disabilities

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/publications/fact-sheets/focus-on-ability-interviewing-applicants-with-disabilities>

RESOURCES

Local Resources

Advocates in Action

<https://www.advocatesinaction.org/>

Advocates in Action Rhode Island is an independent non-profit Statewide Self-Advocacy organization. Its mission is to empower people who have a developmental disability to advocate for themselves and others, to support and strengthen the Self-Advocacy movement and to raise awareness about disability issues in the community. The organization strives to help people become educated about their options, aware of available resources, able to make informed decisions, in control of their own lives, and involved within the community.

Community Provider Network of Rhode Island (CPRNI)

<https://www.cpnri.org/>

The Community Provider Network of Rhode Island (CPRNI) is the non-profit trade association of private providers of services and supports to people with developmental disabilities and intellectual disabilities across Rhode Island.

NAMI Rhode Island, Rhode Island's chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness

<https://namirhodeisland.org/>

NAMI RI provides mental health education, support groups, and other resources.

Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities at Rhode Island College

<http://www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/>

Contact Email : mpallack@ric.edu

The Sherlock Center is a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) which can support organizations in creating more inclusive environments. provides evidence driven and designed to advance policies, practices and research that improve the health, education, social and economic well-being of people with disabilities, their families, and their communities.

Rhode Island Chapter- Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)

<https://apse.org/chapter/rhode-island/>
riapse@apse.org

The Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) is the only national organization focused exclusively on Employment First to facilitate the full inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace and community. They offer training and online webinars.

Rhode Island Parent Information Network

<https://ripin.org/>

RIPIN is a nonprofit organization established in 1991 by a passionate group of parents of children with special needs. These parents recognized that together they could provide support through sharing essential information and helping to find the resources they needed for their loved ones. This peer model continues to be at the heart of the work and has lead RIPIN's network to expand statewide. Today RIPIN has over 100 employees, most of whom have personal experience caring for a loved one with special health care or educational needs.

State Agency Resources

State Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS)

<http://www.ors.ri.gov/>

The mission of ORS is to support individuals with disabilities to obtain, maintain and retain employment. They provide Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services, Services for the Blind, Disability Determination and more.

RI State Law: § 43-3-7.1.

Use of appropriate disability language

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE43/43-3/43-3-7.1.HTM>

Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals

www.bhddh.ri.gov

BHDDH guarantees high-quality, safe and accessible health care services for all individuals with differing intellectual/developmental abilities, mental health or substance use disorders, or who are in the care of facilities administered by BHDDH through an integrated healthcare landscape, in which all Rhode Islanders will thrive.

Rhode Island Governor's Commission on Disabilities

<http://www.gcd.ri.gov/>

Mission: To ensure that all people with disabilities are afforded the opportunities to exercise all the rights and responsibilities accorded to citizens of this state and each person with a disability is able to reach his/her maximum potential in independence, human development, productivity and self-sufficiency.

Financial Resources

ServeRI

AmeriCorps programs may contact ServeRI to explore financial assistance for disability inclusion efforts. The AmeriCorps federal agency provides limited reimbursement funding to local programs to help reasonable accommodations costs for AmeriCorps members. ServeRI needs to initiate this application and may have access to additional financial resources.

The Sherlock Center

The Sherlock Center's Mini Grants Access for All Abilities (AAA) Mini Grant Initiative:
<http://www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/aaaoverview.html>.

Ocean State Center for Independent Living

The Ocean State Center for Independent Living is a non-residential , consumer-driven, community-based, cross-disability, non-profit organization. OSCIL's Information and Referral program provides consumers and their families, service providers, and the general public with information on a wide array of community resources and disability services. <http://www.oscil.org/>

Robert J. Allen Medical Equipment Distribution Center

<https://www.rimasons.org/trestleboard/238-allen-medical-center>

The Rhode Island Masons offer a free medical equipment distribution center. If you are in need of medical equipment or have any equipment you would like to donate contact: The Medical Equipment Center cell phone at 401.451.0184 or 401.246.0865.

You can also email them at
medcenter@rimasons.org or Charities@rimasons.com
for more information

Online Resources

RESOURCES ON THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT & SECTION 504:

- US DHHS Fact Sheet on the Americans with Disabilities Act
<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr/civilrights/resources/factsheets/ada.pdf>
- US DHHS Fact Sheet on Section 504
<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr/civilrights/resources/factsheets/504.pdf>
- The ADA: Your Responsibilities as an Employer
<https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/ada-your-responsibilities-employer>
- The ADA: Questions and Answers
<https://www.eeoc.gov/fact-sheet/ada-questions-and-answers>
- ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities
<https://www.adachecklist.org/checklist.html>

GENERAL RESOURCES ON DISABILITY:

- CAST Online Courses on Universal Design for Learning
<https://www.cast.org/products-services/institutes-online-courses>
- Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN) Training: Disability and Effective Communications
<https://askearn.org/training-center/training/earn-training-disability-and-effective-communications>
- How to Make Your Presentations Accessible to All
<https://www.w3.org/WAI/teach-advocate/accessible-presentations/>
- Person First Language Handout in English and Spanish
<http://onestarfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/People-First-Language-Handout-english-and-spanish.pdf>
- What is Universal Design?
<http://idea.ap.buffalo.edu/about/universal-design/>

RESOURCES ON SPECIFIC DISABILITIES:

- ADA Network's Mental Health Conditions in the Workplace and the ADA Factsheet (available in large print and Spanish as well)
<https://adata.org/factsheet/health>
- JAN's Accommodation and Compliance: Mental Health Conditions
<https://askjan.org/disabilities/Mental-Health-Conditions.cfm>
- Learning Disability Association of America: What Employers Should Know About Learning Disabilities
<https://ldaamerica.org/info/what-employers-should-know-about-learning-disabilities/>
- JAN's Accommodation and Compliance: Learning Disability
<https://askjan.org/disabilities/Learning-Disability.cfm>
- JAN's Accommodation and Compliance: Intellectual Impairment
<https://askjan.org/disabilities/Intellectual-Impairment.cfm>

RESOURCES ON REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS:

- ADA Network's Reasonable Accommodations in the Workplace Fact Sheet (available in large print and Spanish as well)
<https://adata.org/factsheet/reasonable-accommodations-workplace>
- Five Practical Tips For Providing and Maintaining Effective Reasonable Accommodations
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LzQIG7-dU9p-yBouRjD-2exJjBaRyqsT/view?usp=sharing>
- JAN Accommodation and Compliance: Interactive Process
<https://askjan.org/topics/interactive.cfm>
- JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) system
<https://askjan.org/soar.cfm>

RESOURCES ON RECRUITMENT:

- Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN): Recruitment & Hiring
<https://askearn.org/topics/recruitment-hiring/>
- Focus on Ability: Interviewing Applicants with Disabilities
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/publications/fact-sheets/focus-on-ability-interviewing-applicants-with-disabilities>
- Inclusive Service Descriptions (from: "Creating an Inclusive Environment: A Handbook for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in National and Community Service Programs")
<http://onestarfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Section-3-Inclusive-Service-Descriptions.pdf>
- Realistic Job Previews
<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/other-assessment-methods/realistic-job-previews/>
- University of Idaho: Determining Essential & Marginal Job Functions
<https://www.uidaho.edu/-/media/UIDaho-Responsive/Files/human-resources/forms/classification-and-compensation/classification/essential-marginal-job-functions.pdf>
- US Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy on Recruiting & Retaining
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers>



JAN (Job Accommodations Network) AskJan.org

JAN offers numerous publications on accommodation ideas, products and services and an ADA library as well as one-to-one consultation.

- **The JAN Workplace Accommodation Toolkit**
<https://askjan.org/toolkit/>
- **JAN A to Z of Disabilities and Accommodations**
<https://askjan.org/a-to-z.cfm>
- **JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) system**
<https://askjan.org/soar.cfm>
- **JAN Accommodation and Compliance: Interactive Process**
<https://askjan.org/topics/interactive.cfm>
- **Job Accommodation Network: Formulating a Job Description**
<https://askjan.org/topics/jobdesc.cfm#spy-scroll-heading-8>
- **Job Accommodation Network: Identifying the Essential Functions of a Job**
<https://askjan.org/publications/ada-specific/Technical-Assistance-Manual-for-Title-I-of-the-ADA.cfm#spy-scroll-heading-2>

Contact JAN

<https://askjan.org/contact-us.cfm>

You can contact JAN for free, confidential consulting about all aspects of disability accommodations, including the accommodation process, accommodation ideas, product vendors, referral to other resources, and ADA compliance assistance.

Follow JAN on Social Media

Twitter: @JANatJAN

Facebook: @JobAccommodationNetwork



AmeriCorps
Rhode Island

ServeRhodeIsland.com

DISABILITY INCLUSION GUIDE