

Learner Handbook

A Handbook of Rights and Responsibilities of an Adult Learner with a Disability

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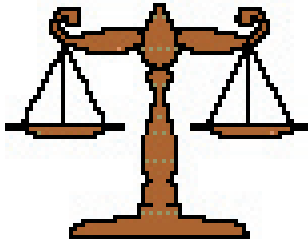


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What is a disability ?

A **disability** is a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more things you want and need to do. It can make it difficult to

- walk, see, hear, or breathe;
- take care of oneself;
- learn; or
- work.

Adults with disabilities include but are not limited to persons with conditions, diseases, and infections, such as

- physical, sight, speech, and hearing impairments;
- epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis;
- cancer, heart disease, diabetes
- infection with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV);
- mental retardation;
- emotional illness; or
- specific learning disabilities.

Persons with a history of such a condition or persons whom other people think of as having such a condition are also considered as people with disabilities.

What are the legal rights of adults with disabilities?

Program accessibility: the program must

- provide a way for you to enroll as a student if you are qualified to receive their services, and
- have a way for people with physical disabilities to get into the buildings and classrooms.

Non-discrimination/equal opportunity

means that you must have an equal chance to participate and be successful. It **means** that no one can

- refuse to enroll you in the program because of your disability, or
- provide you with different or separate opportunities than everyone else.

It does **not** mean that anyone will

- give you easier work, or
- change the rules to make it easier for you than others.

An **accommodation** is any change needed to help you learn the skill or do the work necessary for you to learn. It may mean

- using different kinds of learning materials;
- using special equipment, such as a computer or a calculator;
- having a special tutor or other qualified person to help you; or
- using auxiliary aids and services.

An accommodation

- **does not** include making changes in rules to make it easier for you than for others; and
- **should not** create an “undue hardship” for the center. You may not get the most expensive or “best” accommodation, just one that will help you do what needs to be done.

What are responsibilities of adults with disabilities?

Be your own **self advocate**. Self-advocacy means that you can explain your disability, suggest some accommodations, and find ways to help yourself.

Tell about your **disability** if you want accommodations.

Be prepared to provide **records** about your disability.

Tell what **accommodations** have worked for you.

Know that you have **legal rights**.

Ask for **accommodations** based on your need and the law.

What is an accommodation?

An accommodation is a change that

- is required by law;
- helps people with disabilities have a fair chance for success;
- gives an equal chance to work in, learn in, and enter a building;
- is chosen for the individual person's need; and
- is needed when you do similar tasks in other places.

An accommodation may include

- using special equipment;
- doing work a different way;
- doing work in a different place; or
- changing how others think about disabilities.

What are legal issues for adults with disabilities?

There are three major pieces of legislation that affect adults with disabilities in adult education centers.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (504) was the first civil rights legislation specifically written to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. Section 504 guarantees that a person with a disability will not be discriminated against because of that disability in any program receiving federal funds.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) expands the scope of 504 and covers more programs and services, especially by including the private sector. The ADA concerns the availability of accommodations or auxiliary aids, as well as physical access to services.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) applies to students ages 3 to 21 or the age they leave the public school. It applies only to those who are educationally disabled and need special education services. Other services include rehabilitation counseling, social work services, and transition planning.

Trifold Brochure

The Trifold brochure is an introductory handout that can be used during program orientation or enrollment activities. Depending on a learner's reading level, this brochure should be used in conjunction with the rest of the *Learner Handbook*. An English version of the trifold (like the one pictured below), is available in the Duplication Masters at the end of the notebook. This trifold is available upon request in other language versions, such as Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish and Vietnamese, as well as audio-taped and braille.

Accommodations

Accommodations are changes made to give *you* equal opportunity. If *you* know your rights and responsibilities, *you* can help yourself learn better by finding accommodations that work for *you*.

Examples of accommodations:

- more time
- individual tests
- private work area
- calculators
- readers
- note takers
- oral or sign language interpreters
- tapes, large print or Braille
- taped, typed or dictated answers
- special class or test settings
- adaptive environment
- written instructions
- repeated instructions
- building access
- assistive devices

Numbers to call:

Americans with Disabilities Act Hotline 1-800-949-4232: Educates and trains the public on ADA compliance.

HEATH Resource Center 1-800-544-3284: Information exchange about educational support services, policies, procedures, adaptations, and opportunities at postsecondary settings.

GED Hotline 1-800-626-9433: Answers questions about obtaining a GED and provides information about local preparation and test centers

Job Accommodation Network 1-800-526-7234: Provides individualized worksite accommodation solutions, technical assistance regarding the ADA and other disability related legislation, and educates callers about self-employment options

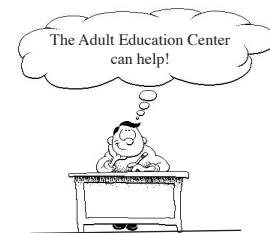
National Literacy Hotline 1-800-228-8813: Refers potential learners and volunteers to literacy programs in their areas

ADA/IT 1-800-949-4232: Assists people with disabilities and family members as they seek to understand disability laws

ABLEDATA 1-800-227-0216: Provides information on assistive technology and rehabilitation equipment available to consumers, organizations, professionals, and caregivers.

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How can you learn better?



Rights and responsibilities of an adult learner with a disability