

November 16, 2017



Accessibility of VITA/TCE Sites for Persons with Disabilities

Civil Rights Unit

**Office of Equity,
Diversity & Inclusion**



Goals

- Accessibility requirements under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Ensuring facility accessibility for taxpayers with disabilities

Introduction

Taxpayers, by law, are entitled to reasonable accommodations to access the products and services you provide.



Why is Accessibility Important?

“ A qualified individual with a disability in the United States, solely by reason of his or her disability, cannot be excluded from the participation or denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance .”

SECTION 504



29 USC § 794



Why Would a Complaint be Filed?

A violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act occurs when:

- Taxpayer was eligible to receive the benefit that was denied
- Taxpayer was denied the benefit “solely by reason” of his or her disability





IRS Civil Rights Policy

Your **Civil Rights** are **PROTECTED**

Sus **Derechos Civiles** están **PROTEGIDOS**

In accordance with federal law and the Department of the Treasury – Internal Revenue Service policy, discrimination against taxpayers on the basis of race, color, national origin (including limited English proficiency), disability, sex (in education programs or activities), age or reprisal is prohibited in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Taxpayers with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation and taxpayers with limited English proficiency may request language assistance to access service.

De acuerdo con la ley federal y la política del Departamento del Tesoro – Servicio de Impuestos Internos, la discriminación contra los contribuyentes basadas en raza, color, origen nacional (incluso el dominio limitado del inglés), discapacidad, género (en los programas educativos o actividades), edad o represalia, está prohibida en los programas o actividades que reciben asistencia financiera federal. Los contribuyentes con una discapacidad pueden solicitar acomodo razonable y contribuyentes con un dominio limitado del inglés podrán solicitar asistencia con el idioma para tener acceso al servicio.


**Operations Director,
Civil Rights Division
Internal Revenue Service
Room 2413
1111 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20224**

If a taxpayer believes he or she has been discriminated against, a written complaint should be sent to the address referenced within. For all other inquiries concerning taxpayer civil rights, contact us at the mailing address or e-mail or at edl.civilrights@irs.gov

Do not send tax returns or other tax-related information to the Civil Rights Division office or e-mail address.

Si un contribuyente cree que él o ella ha sido discriminado, debe enviar una queja por escrito al DDC, a la dirección de referencia. Para todas las demás consultas relacionadas a los derechos civiles del contribuyente, comuníquese a la dirección que aparece a la izquierda o envíenos un correo electrónico a edl.civilrights@irs.gov

No envíe declaraciones de impuestos u otra información que no está relacionada con los derechos civiles, a la oficina de la División de Derechos Civiles o al correo electrónico.



The poster provides that, “Taxpayers with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation....”

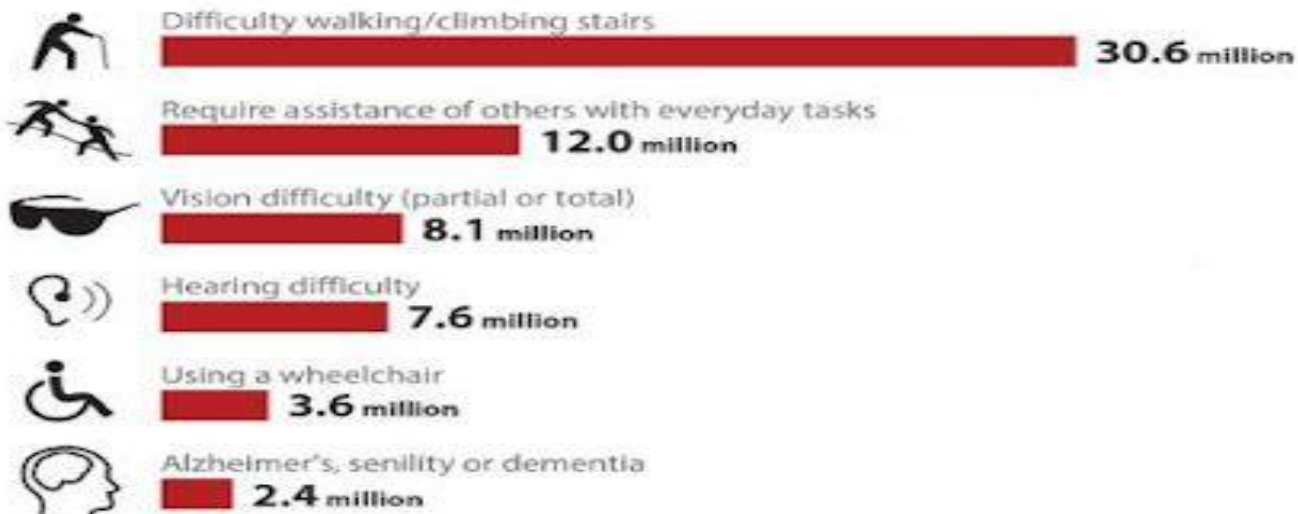


Known Facts

About **2 in 10** adults live with a **disability**



How Common are Specific Disabilities?





Mobility Limitation Accommodations

FACT SHEET

FS 2015: Accommodating Taxpayers Who Use Wheelchairs or Other Mobility Devices

Civil Rights Division Advisory # 14-11

September 2014



This document is provided, in consultation with the Civil Rights Division, as guidance for VITA/TCE/LITC programs.

Recipients of federal financial assistance (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) and Low Income Tax Clinic (LITC) sites) are required to provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. Section 504 prohibits discrimination based on disability.

People who use wheelchairs and other mobility devices generally have varying disabilities and abilities. Some can use their arms and hands, and some may be able to get out of the wheelchair and walk short distances. Don't assume that each person who uses a wheelchair or assistive device has the same disability or limitations. That assumption could potentially lead to a claim of discrimination based on disability.

Interacting effectively with individuals who use a wheelchair or other mobility device:

- Say "wheelchair user," rather than "confined to a wheelchair" or "wheelchair bound."
The wheelchair is what enables the person to get around and participate in society; it is liberating, not confining.

[Site Coordinator Corner – Wheelchairs/Mobility Devices](#)

External Building Accessibility



Interior Building Accessibility



Other Facility Accessibility



Service Animal General Guidelines

FACT SHEET

FS 2015: Service Animals for Taxpayers with Disabilities

Civil Rights Division Advisory # 14-10

September 2014



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Reasonable accommodation should be provided to individuals with disabilities who require service animals. This could mean modifying a "no animals on premises" policy to allow an individual with a disability and his/her service animal access to services.

What is a service animal?

A service animal is any guide dog, signal dog or other animal that is individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task of a trained service animal must be directly related to the person's

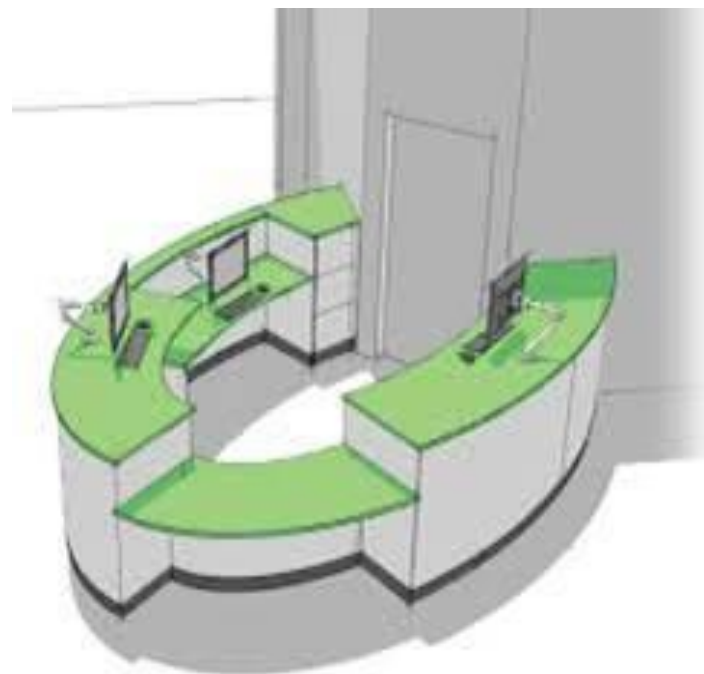


[Site Coordinator Corner – Service Animals](#)



Civil Rights Unit Role in Taxpayer Accessibility

Help identify appropriate remedies for accessibility issues.





Contacting Civil Rights Division

Civil Rights Division Taxpayer Accommodations:

Phone: 202-317-7020



E-mail: edi.crd.ra@irs.gov



Tips on Disability Etiquette

1 | Speak directly.

Speak directly to the individual with a disability rather than through a companion or sign language interpreter who may be present.



5 | Treat adults as adults.

Address people with disabilities by their first names only when extending that same familiarity to all others. Never patronize people in wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder.



Ten Key Points for Communicating with People with Disabilities

8 | Place yourself at eye level when speaking with someone in a wheelchair or on crutches.

[Publication 5192](#)



Become Familiar with Resources

- Sign Language Interpreter Resources and Procedures
- Fact Sheets/Civil Rights Advisories on Disability Accommodations
- Pub 5192 - Tips on Disability Etiquette
- Pub 4671/1101 – Civil Rights Review



Recap

You should now be familiar with:

- Accessibility requirements under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Your role in ensuring facility accessibility for taxpayers with disabilities



Office of Equity Diversity & Inclusion

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