

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)/LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)**  
**Self-Evaluation Form**

District Montgomery Form completed by: William M Cranker Phone #: 518-853-8290

**Access – ADA**

1. Do you have an ADA contact person within DSS who is responsible for social services program access and for the taking and resolution of complaints from applicants/recipients (A/Rs)?

X Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No (\*)

2. If yes to #1, who is your ADA contact? Brian Kearns

Please provide the ADA contact's telephone # 518-853-8259

3. a. Has your district done a self-evaluation of program access by A/Rs with disabilities?

Yes X (Please attach a copy of the report) No \_\_\_\_\_ (\*)

b. Were deficiencies found in the self-evaluation?

Yes X (go to c.) No \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to #4)

c. Were corrective actions taken?

Yes X (Please attach copy of the corrective action plan) No \_\_\_\_\_ (\*)

4. Do you have a written procedure for handling complaints from applicants/recipients who claim to have been denied access to social services programs due to a disability?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (Please attach copy) No X (\*)

5. Do you provide applicants/recipients (A/Rs) for social services programs with information about the ADA's prohibitions against discrimination?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (Please attach copy) No X

6. Reasonable accommodation means an adaptation or alteration that gives an A/R with disabilities meaningful access to social services programs. Do you have written reasonable accommodation procedures?

Yes  (Please attach copy) No  (\*)

7. Do you have a procedure to insure that the A/R who is offered reasonable accommodation, but refuses, understands the consequences of that refusal?

Yes  (Please attach copy) No  (\*)

**Access – General Disabilities**

1. a. Are your facilities accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities?

Yes  No

b. Are your parking areas and sidewalks accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities?

Yes  No

c. Is the entrance wheelchair accessible?

Yes  No

d. Are bathrooms and drinking fountains wheelchair accessible?

Yes  No

e. Are areas such as the photo ID/finger imaging areas wheelchair accessible?

Yes  No

f. If No to e., are alternate accessible sites available?

Yes  No  NA

g. If the client area is above or below the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, are there elevators?

Yes  No  1<sup>st</sup> floor only

h. If No to g., are services available at alternate accessible sites?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ (\*) NA

2. In social services districts with more than one district office, are all district offices accessible according to #1. a – e above.

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No (go to #3) NA

3. When one or more district office is not handicap accessible, is reasonable accommodation offered?

\_\_\_ Yes (attach copy of reasonable accommodation plan, or specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ No (\*) NA

4. Do you have procedures for determining when home visits will be provided for A/Rs who are physically or mentally unable to travel to the office/center?

X  Yes (go to #6) \_\_\_ No (\*) (go to #5)

5. If No to #4, what alternate accommodations are provided?  NA

6. Are the home visit or alternate accommodations procedures in writing?

\_\_\_ Yes (please attach a copy – go to #7)  X  No (\*) (go to #7)

7. How is the district's policy regarding home visits or alternate accommodations conveyed to A/Rs?

By the individual's worker   
(Go to #8)

8. How is the district's policy regarding home visits or alternate accommodations conveyed to the appropriate LDSS staff?

Through staff development orientation & supervisory training

**Access – Visually/sight Impaired**

1. a. Are there signs in Braille for the visually/sight impaired?

|                |               |                            |
|----------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Yes <u> X </u> | No ___        | Men's and Women's rooms    |
| Yes ___        | No <u> X </u> | Room Numbers               |
| Yes ___        | No <u> X </u> | Exits                      |
| Yes ___        | No <u> X </u> | Permanent Rooms and Spaces |
| Yes ___        | No <u> X </u> | Elevators                  |

b. If NO to any of the above, how does the visually impaired person find a necessary location?

Assisted by agency staff

2. Do you have procedures in place for A/Rs who, due to visual impairment, are unable to read the application, information booklets, notices, etc.?

Yes \_\_\_ (Please provide copy) No X (\*)

**Access – Mental Impairment**

1. Do you have procedures in place to assist a mentally impaired A/R?

Yes X (Please provide copy) No \_\_\_ (\*)

**Access – Hearing Impaired**

1. Do you have procedures in place to assist hearing impaired A/Rs?

Yes X (Please provide copy) No \_\_\_ (\*)

2. Is a sign-language interpreter provided?

Yes X No \_\_\_ (\*)

3. Does the office/agency have TTY/TTD equipment or New York Relay Services available?

Yes \_\_\_ (Type of Service: \_\_\_\_\_) No X

**Access – Limited English Proficiency**

1. Do you have procedures to assist limited or non-English speaking A/Rs?

Yes X (Please provide copy) No \_\_\_ (\*)

2. Are the following available in other than English language?

|                        |                                |        |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Signs                  | Yes <u>X</u>                   | No ___ |
| Posters                | Yes <u>X</u>                   | No ___ |
| Pamphlets              | Yes <u>X</u>                   | No ___ |
| Other client handouts: | Yes <u>X</u> (Describe: _____) | No ___ |

3. a. Is the "Interpreter Services Poster" (PUB-4842) displayed in the waiting area?

Yes  No  (\*)

b. Is the recommended 6/04 version of the "Interpreter Services Desk Guide" (PUB-4843) and/or the optional language palm cards used? Yes  No

(\*) Answers with (\*) will require a corrective action plan to be submitted within sixty days of the date that this form is due to the returned to the Division of Employment and Transitional Supports (DETS).



# Montgomery County Department of Social Services

BROADWAY, P.O. BOX 745 · FONDA, N.Y. 12068-0745 · PHONE (518) 853-4646 · FAX (518) 853-8223

William M. Cranker  
Commissioner

July 13, 2006

## Attachment schedule

### Page 1: Access - ADA # 6:

Q: Reasonable accommodation means an adaptation or alteration that gives an Applicant/Recipient (A/R) with disabilities meaningful access to social services programs.

Do you have written reasonable accommodation procedures?

A: *No: The Montgomery County Department of Social Services (which, in future text, will be referred to as 'The Agency') does not specifically have any written reasonable accommodation procedure regarding any adaptations or alterations that gives an (A/R) with disabilities meaningful access to The Agency's social services programs. However, the design, arrangement and location of our Agency's Social Services' reception, intake and interview areas allows for A/Rs with disabilities optimal accessibility.*

*(For example, The Agency's disabilities parking is the nearest to the automated doors, which brings an A/R with disabilities directly into the waiting/reception area for the Department of Social Services).*

### Page 2: Access - General Disabilities # 4:

Q: Do you have procedures for determining when home visits will be provided for A/Rs who are physically or mentally unable to travel to the office/center?

A: *Yes: There is a referral worksheet (EXH. A) completed by the eligibility determination worker which would be forwarded to the services department; the services unit would then make the arrangements, coordinating with the A/R as to where/when would be most accommodating.*

### Page 3: Access - Visually/Sight Impaired # 1:

Q: a. Are there signs in Braille for the visually/sight impaired?

b. If no to any of the above, how does the visually impaired person find a necessary location?

A: *Agency Staff assists them.*

### Access - Hearing Impaired # 1:

Q: Do you have procedures in place to assist hearing impaired A/Rs?

A: *Yes: The procedures we have in place to assist hearing impaired A/Rs include referral services to the Independent Living Resources Center.*

### Page 4: Access - Limited English Proficiency # 1:

Q: Do you have procedures to assist limited or non-English speaking A/Rs?

A: *Yes: Generally, the non-English speaking A/Rs that seek services from The Agency need assistance through a Hispanic translator. In addition to having bi-lingual staff, The Agency also contracts with outside agencies such as Hispanic Outreach and Centro Civico locally, to assist these specific A/Rs.*

### Summary/Overview:

The Montgomery County Department of Social Services performs a host of other duties to ensure A/Rs, staff and visitors, as well as anyone else from the general public, are not excluded from services, programs and activities due to their disabilities.

In addition to annual trainings for current staff, new staff members are provided with reference materials regarding how to accommodate A/Rs with disabilities (including, but not limited to EXH B1 & B2).

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

REFERRAL - GENERAL

From \_\_\_\_\_

Case Name \_\_\_\_\_

To \_\_\_\_\_

Case # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

ACTION REQUESTED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Worker \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

TO BE COMPLETED BY PERSON PROVIDING REFERRAL SERVICE

ACTION TAKEN & RESULTS:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Act courteously.  
Do not be afraid to ask the person to repeat something.

## MENTAL ILLNESS

People who are mentally ill are individuals whose emotional or mental abilities to cope with life are impaired. Mental illness is not the same as mental retardation. Most people recover from a mental illness just as most people recover from a physical illness or disease. Usually, you will not know that a person was ever mentally ill. However, if you come in contact with someone who is having a mental or emotional crisis: Ask if something is the matter and offer to talk. Offer to get the help of a friend, relative, or clergy. Offer to obtain the services of a psychiatrist, psychologist or trained counselor.

Do not call the police or an ambulance unless there is a clear indication that the person is potentially harmful to others or to himself or herself.

## EPILEPSY

Epilepsy is a hidden disability and is a disorder of the nervous system. Seizures are a primary characteristic of epilepsy, but they can be controlled or prevented by the use of medication. Most seizures last only a few minutes and many individuals receive enough of a warning to avoid falling or other injury.

If an individual has a seizure:

- Keep calm. You cannot stop a seizure once it has started. Do not restrain the person.
- Clear the area of hard, sharp or hot objects which could injure the individual. Place a pillow or rolled-up coat under the person's head.

## NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS

There are numerous other neurological disorders which affect people's lives. The severity and characteristics of the disorder--whether physical or behavioral--may range from mild to severe.

Many of the limits listed above for other people with disabilities apply to people with neurological disorders. The need for acceptance and sensitivity is the same.

## NO-NO WORDS

Just as some well-known, four-letter words are offensive to many, so are some words used in referring to people with disabilities equally offensive. The use of adjectives such as disabled, blind and deaf before the noun or instead of a noun is demeaning. Here are some to avoid when speaking to or about people with disabilities.

**AFFLICTED** -- It is negative and suggests hopelessness.

**CEREBRAL PALSIED** -- Sounds like an inanimate object instead of a person. The correct description is "person with cerebral palsy."

**CONFINED TO A WHEELCHAIR** -- A person is not confined to a wheelchair, but uses one to move about--just as he or she uses a bed to sleep.

**COURAGEOUS** -- People who have disabilities are not unusually brave and do not want to be regarded as superheroes. Like everyone else, they have the will to live and experience life.

**CRIPPLED** -- This paints a mental picture of a person who cannot do anything--someone whom people would rather ignore.

**DEAF AND DUMB OR DEAF MUTE** -- These out-of-date terms were used to describe people unable to hear or speak. Many people who cannot hear or have limited hearing can speak, although their speech may be hard to understand. Deafness does not make a person dumb or ignorant.

**DISEASE** -- Describes a contagious condition. Most persons with disabilities are as healthy as anyone else.

**EPILEPTIC** -- Individuals with this condition prefer to be referred to as persons who have epilepsy.

**GIMP** -- This out-of-date word was once used to describe someone who walked with a limp. It's an insult.

**NORMAL** -- When used to describe someone who does not have a disability, it suggests--by comparison--that a person with a disability is abnormal or subnormal.

**PATIENT** -- Hospitals and doctors have patients. Most people who have disabilities are not in

hospitals or regularly cared for by doctors. Rather, they are self-reliant members of the community who visit a doctor only when ill.

**POOR** -- Describes a person who lacks money or one to be pitied.

**RETARD, RETARDATE OR RETARDED**-- Because some people with disabilities are at times considered awkward, this does not mean that they are retarded. Individuals who are mentally retarded prefer to be called by their own personal names.

**SPASTIC** -- Some people lack coordination but this is only a result of the physical disability and should not be ridiculed.

**SUFFERING** -- To say that someone suffers from a disability implies that he or she is in constant pain as a result of the disability. This is rarely the case.

**UNFORTUNATE** -- This implies unlucky, unsuccessful or social outcast. Whether or not luck had anything to do with a person becoming disabled, he or she wants to be regarded as a real, likable person.

**VICTIM** -- Victims are people sacrificed by an uncontrollable force or agent. People with disabilities do not want to be considered as helpless victims but as people--with many worthwhile qualities.

## New York State

**Office of Advocate for the Disabled**  
**One Empire State Plaza, 10-th Floor**  
**Albany, New York 12223-0001**  
**(518) 473-4538 (voice only)**  
**(518) 473-4231 (TDD only)**  
**1-800-522-4369 (voice and TDD)**

**116 West 32nd Street, 14th Floor**  
**New York, New York 10001-3009**  
**(212) 502-0877 (voice only)**  
**(212) 502-0882 (TDD only)**

# What makes people with disabilities disabled?

New York State  
Office of Advocate for the Disabled



## INTRODUCTION

RECENT YEARS, much attention has been given to the rights of people with disabilities. Legislation and the efforts of many interest groups have improved accessibility in buildings, increased education and employment opportunities and realistic portrayals of persons with disabilities in television programming and motion pictures.

These developments--resulting from the recognition that people with disabilities are valuable and equal members of society--help people who have disabilities lead more satisfying, productive lives.

However, many people still view individuals with disabilities as lesser people--to be pitied, feared or ignored. These attitudes may arise from a fear of someone who is different in any way or simply from a lack of information about disabilities. As much as the disability itself may affect a person's life, being treated as a lesser person prevents a person with a disability from leading a productive life and enjoying the same opportunities as others. This brochure gives suggestions on how to relate to people with disabilities, how to look beyond the disability and look at the individual's ability and the personality--the things that make each of us unique and worthwhile.

## COMMUNICATION -- THE TWO WAY STREET

If you are not used to communicating with a person who has a disability and have any hesitations or concerns, here are a few tips:

**USE COMMON SENSE** -- People with disabilities want to be treated the same way as everyone else.

**BE POLITE** -- Show the person the same respect that you expect to receive.

**BE CONSIDERATE** -- Be patient, take time and try to understand the problem or need of the individual.

**OFFER ASSISTANCE** -- Do not hesitate to offer assistance. However, do not automatically give help unless the person clearly needs help or asks for it.

Ask the person if assistance is needed and how it should be given. If the person declines your help, do not insist on helping.

**COMMUNICATE** -- Talk directly to the person. Communication is not difficult, although in some cases, it may take a little time, depending on the person's disability.

**EMERGENCY ACTION** -- Know about the location of individuals who have disabilities in your building to help with evacuation, if necessary, during an emergency.

## HELPFUL HINTS

### DEAFNESS/HEARING IMPAIRMENT

A person's failure to respond to a spoken request or warning may be the result of an inability to hear.

Gestures and guttural sounds made by a person who is deaf or hearing impaired are not signs of anger, belligerence or intoxication. They may be the individual's only method of communication. Keep in mind, however, that many individuals with hearing impairments have very clear speech.

When communicating with a person who is hearing impaired:

Be considerate and try to make the person feel comfortable and confident in dealing with you.

Look directly at the person to whom you are speaking. Speak slowly--the person may wish to lip-read.

If a sign-language interpreter is present, talk directly to the person who is deaf--not to the interpreter.

Be flexible with your language. If a word is not understood, try another word rather than simply repeating yourself or saying it louder.

Beware of false interpretations (a nod of the head does not necessarily mean "I understand").

Do not shout. Hearing aids make sounds louder, not clearer.

Use sign language only if you are qualified.

Otherwise, incorrect information may be conveyed.

If all else fails, use a pad and pencil to communicate.

### BLINDNESS/VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

People who are blind or visually impaired rely on their own senses to "see" the world around them. When you

are with a person who is blind or visually impaired: Speak directly to the person, using a normal tone of voice. Blindness does not affect a person's hearing.

Do not be afraid to use terms such as "See you soon." Everyday words relating to vision are used by people who are blind.

Offer assistance but be guided by the individual's response.

Be specific in giving directions. It is useless to point or give visual landmarks. If the individual must make a turn, state whether it should be left or right.

Walk alongside and slightly ahead of the person who is blind or visually impaired when you are assisting.

Never hold the person's arm while walking. Let the person hold your arm. The motion of your body tells the person what to expect.

Avoid escalators or revolving doors, if possible. These can be disconcerting and dangerous.

Assist the individual on stairs by guiding a hand to a banister. When giving assistance in seating, place the person's hand on the back or arm of the seat.

Never leave a person who is blind in an open area. Instead, lead the person to the side of a room or to a chair or some landmark from which he or she can obtain a direction for travel.

Do not leave the person abruptly after talking in a crowd -- or where there is noise that may obstruct the person's hearing -- without saying that you are leaving. Otherwise, the blind person may be talking when no one is listening or even present.

Do not pet a guide dog. The dog has an important job to do and petting may be distracting.

## MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS

Individuals use wheelchairs, crutches or leg braces as a result of a variety of disabilities including spinal-cord injury, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, arthritis, cerebral palsy or polio. Wheelchairs provide mobility to persons with paralysis, muscle weakness, lack of coordination, nerve damage or stiffness of joints.

When you are with a person using a wheelchair:

Talk directly to the person in the wheelchair, rather than to a companion. People with mobility impairments are fully capable of speaking for themselves.

Push a wheelchair only after asking the person if assistance is needed.

When assisting someone in a wheelchair to go up or down a curb, ask if the person prefers to go forward or backward.

In guiding a wheelchair down an incline, hold the push handles so that the chair does not go too fast. Learn the location of wheelchair accessible ramps, rest rooms, elevators and telephones. For more than one step, keep the chair tilted back at all times while descending or ascending.

## MENTAL RETARDATION

People who are mentally retarded have limited ability to learn and sometimes have difficulty in using what they have learned. Through education and training, however, many people who are mentally retarded can learn to be self-sufficient.

When communicating:

Do not use complex sentences.

Make instructions clear and concise.

Do not be condescending. Talk to the person as a person--talk to adults as adults, not as children.

Each person deserves the same respect as anyone else.

## CEREBRAL PALSY

Cerebral palsy is a disability, not a disease, and is a result of injury to the central nervous system which may occur before, during or anytime after birth. People with cerebral palsy have difficulty in controlling large and small muscles. The effects of cerebral palsy vary from mild to severe. In some instances, the condition is barely noticeable. While, in others, the person may be unable to speak or speech cannot be readily understood. The use of hands or legs may be limited.

When dealing with a person with cerebral palsy: Be yourself. Speak directly to the individual, not to a friend or companion. Try to give your whole, unhurried attention if the person has difficulty speaking. Do not complete the speaker's sentences. Let the person finish.