



NIAGARA COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
P.O. BOX 506
LOCKPORT, NEW YORK 14095-0506

NIAGARA FALLS OFFICE
P.O. BOX 865
301 TENTH STREET
NIAGARA FALLS, NY 14302-0865

TROTT ACCESS CENTER
1001 11TH STREET
NIAGARA FALLS, NY 14301

"We Help Families"

NIAGARA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

POLICY & PROCEDURE DIRECTIVE RE:

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

ADA TITLE II – ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

This Policy and Procedure tells you what the Americans with Disabilities Act is and how Title II of the Act addresses government services. It also explains who is covered by the Act and what is required of government entities to ensure non-discrimination based on disability in their programs, services, activities and facilities.

WHAT IS "THE ADA"?

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a Federal law that provides civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. The ADA guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations (such as stores, restaurants, and hotels), employment, state and local government services, and transportation.

WHAT IS TITLE II?

The ADA has five sections, or "titles", each addressing different areas of the law. Title II of the ADA addresses state and local governments, such as the Niagara County Department of Social Services, as set forth in section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. All state and local government services and those services that receive state and/or local assistance must be in compliance with these requirements. The ADA and Section 504 protects qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of disability when accessing and participating in the Department's services, programs, or activities.

WHO IS PROTECTED BY TITLE II?

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

1. Examples of physical impairments.

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

2. Examples of mental impairments.

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

3. Examples of major life activities.

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

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

4. Applicants, recipients, and members of the public.

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

5. The individual must meet essential program eligibility requirements.

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

6. Past history of a disability.

The ADA/504 also protect those with a past history of a disability from discrimination based on that history. For example, employment services contractors cannot refuse to place a cash assistance recipient in a job placement that involves working with children because the individual received treatment for a mental health problem in the past. Nor can an employment services contractors deny an individual a work placement because the individual has a past history of substance abuse.

7. Regarded as having a disability.

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

8. Health and safety factors.

Health and safety factors can be taken into account in determining who is qualified. An individual who poses a "direct threat" to the health or safety of one's self or others is not qualified. A direct threat is a significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of one's self or others that cannot be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level by accommodations or modifications to the program. This threat must be real and may not be based on generalizations or stereotypes about the effects of a particular disability.

Before excluding an individual with a disability based on a direct threat, consultation with your supervisor and Chief Counsel is strongly recommended. It should be noted that this exception is often more narrowly defined than one might expect.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS OF TITLE II?

1. Equality in Participation and Benefits

Persons with disabilities must have an equally effective opportunity to participate in or benefit from Department programs, services, and activities. (See the "Equally Effective Communication" section below)

Examples:

- A deaf or hard of hearing individual does not experience equal opportunity to benefit from attending a public meeting unless s/he has access to what is said through an interpreter or by being provided with an assistive listening device or real-time captioning.
- A wheelchair user will not have an equal opportunity to participate in a program if applications must be filed on the second floor office of a building without an elevator.
- Use of printed information alone is not equally effective for those with low vision who cannot read regular written material.

2. Reasonable Accommodations

The Department must reasonably modify its policies, practices, or procedures to ensure access and equal opportunity to individuals with disabilities.

The Department's assistance programs provide medical, food, shelter, and cash grants to individuals who can demonstrate their eligibility. The application process, however, is extremely lengthy and complex. When many individuals with mental disabilities apply for benefits, they are unable to complete the application process successfully. As a result, they are effectively denied benefits to which they are otherwise entitled. In this case, the Department has an obligation to make reasonable accommodations to its application process to ensure that otherwise eligible individuals are not denied needed benefits.

a. Examples.

Accommodations to the relief program might include simplifying the application process or providing applicants who have mental disabilities with individualized assistance to complete the process, such as:

- Help with filling out an application for benefits and help with gathering documents showing eligibility for benefits or a disability.

- Accommodations in appointments, including scheduling appointments at time of day that will prevent long waits; seeing clients who cannot wait on a priority basis; scheduling appointments so they do not conflict with doctor's appointments, rehab, or therapy; combining appointments to reduce travel; home visits for individuals who have difficulty traveling to the Department or attending appointments at the Department for disability-related reasons; allowing clients to reschedule appointments when a disability prevents attendance.
- Giving a person more time to submit documents or complete other tasks.
- Providing additional explanations of forms and program rules.
- Allowing an individual to bring a friend, relative, neighbor, or advocate with them to DSS appointments and during the application process.
- With the client's consent, sending copies of notices to a client's friend, relative or neighbor who can remind the client of appointments and/or help the client attend an appointment.
- Reading notices and other program materials to the client.
- Providing notices, applications, and other program materials in alternative formats (e.g., large print, Braille, audiotape, etc).
- Modifying welfare work activities (discussed below).
- Modifying agency policies for people with disabilities when necessary to avoid discrimination (e.g., shelter policies, appointment policies, no-animal policies, policies about how a task must be done).
- Allowing clients with disabilities to communicate with a worker by email or other methods when needed for a disability-related reason.
- Allowing clients to submit documents by fax when needed for a disability-related reason.

b. General Department Policy.

- As with any case, staff must address the client's emergency and immediate as may be appropriate to the case.
- If a client expresses that they cannot complete the application for any of a number of reasons, a clerical staff member must assist the client with the application completion.

However, a social services worker or supervisor cannot assist the client with an application, as the same person that assists the client can not be part of the eligibility determination.

Each office has designated a clerical person that will be the primary source to assist a client. In Niagara Falls, Alfie Tall is designated. In Lockport, Paul Baran is designated. If the designated person is unavailable, contact their supervisor or the supervisor on duty.

- If a client asks for any accommodation and the accommodation is easily or can be immediately provided, the accommodation must be provided at the time of the request.
- If a client asks for any accommodation and the accommodation is not easily or cannot be immediately provided, staff must speak to their supervisor or supervisor on duty to see what can be done to facilitate the client's special needs.

All requests for accommodations that are given to a supervisor must be given on the day of the request and responded to the same day whenever possible or by the next day. Depending on the type of accommodation, every attempt is made to meet the request within 5 days.

- If the disability is not readily apparent, client may be asked to provide appropriate documentation of the disability. If the client fails or refuses to comply with the request to provide appropriate documentation where the disability is not readily apparent after being given reasonable opportunity, reasonable accommodation may be denied.

Once an accommodation is requested/made, there is an indicator in the case notes to insure the accommodation continues at all subsequent contact until it is no longer needed. However, based on State regulation, medical verification must be renewed annually.

- When an appointment is rescheduled because reasonable accommodations cannot be made or no interpreter is available on the date the application is filed, the delay does not affect the application filing date or any other dates relevant to the processing of applications.

c. Temporary Assistance.

- When an applicant contacts the Department (in person or by telephone or by mail), indicating that they are unable to attend a face to face interview for a program that requires a face to face, the Department requires that the applicant provide medical verification that they are unable to come to our building and upon receipt of that verification a home visit is scheduled at the earliest convenience of both the applicant and the department.

d. Medicaid.

- No face to face interview is necessary; however, if an applicant requests an interview, one can be arranged.

e. Food Stamp.

- Interviews can be conducted by the use of a designated authorized representative if the applicant chooses to designate someone to conduct their interview.

- For face to face home visits, medical verification is needed.

- A telephone interview may be conducted for Food Stamps if that is possible for the applicant.

f. Work Requirements.

- Any person claiming they are unable to work in any capacity is given time (10 days) to provide medical verification of exemption or limitations. A state notice (LDSS 4005 – Exempt or LDSS 4005(a) – Non-Exempt) is provided to the applicant or recipient as notice of decision. It provides fair hearing rights to anyone that does not agree with the Department's determination of work requirements or limitations.

3. Equally Effective Communication

The Niagara Department of Social Services must ensure that its communications with people with disabilities are as effective as its communications with others. The Department is required to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to ensure effective communication. Primary consideration must be given to the choice of auxiliary aid requested by the disabled person.

Whatever accommodation is requested, the Department must seek to provide it unless it is determined it has

been proven to result in either a fundamental alteration in the program, or result in an undue financial or administrative burden.

a. Examples of auxiliary aids and services include:

- Deaf or hard of hearing and speech disability: qualified interpreters, written materials, exchange of written notes (if the communication is not complex), and computer terminals (take turns typing back and forth if the communication is not complex).

The 711 dialing code may be used for access to Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). Persons with hearing or speech disabilities, or persons needing to contact them can connect to TRS by simply dialing the digits 711 from any phone in the United States.

- Blind or low vision: qualified readers; audiotape, Braille, or large print materials, audio-descriptions of PowerPoint or video presentations; and assistance in locating items.

b. Sight Impaired.

- For sight impaired, the worker is required to read everything to the applicant and additional time is allowed for this to be possible.

c. Interpreters.

- The local district will schedule a professional interpreter to attend the interview with the individual for people who are hearing impaired and who are unable to speak or read English.

- The Department maintains contracts with a number of agencies and people. A list of interpreters is attached hereto.

4. Integrated Setting.

Individuals with disabilities cannot be excluded from regular programs or required to accept accommodations. The Department may offer separate or special programs when necessary to provide people with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from the programs.

Examples:

- Accommodations should be made for wheelchair users during group orientation sessions.
- A separate orientation session for individuals who are sight impaired.

5. Eligibility Criteria and Medical Inquiries.

The Department's eligibility criteria for participation in its programs, services or activities must not screen out or tend to screen out people with disabilities, except in rare instances when such requirements are necessary.

6. Safety.

The Department may impose legitimate safety requirements necessary for the safe operation of its services, programs, and activities. Safety requirements must be based on real risks, not on speculation, stereotypes, or generalizations about people with disabilities.

7. Surcharges.

Although providing accommodations may result in some additional cost, the Department may not place a surcharge only on particular individuals with disabilities to cover expenses. For example, there can be no extra program charge to a deaf person for interpreter services, or to groups of people with disabilities

8. Personal Services and Devices.

The Department is not required to provide people with disabilities with personal or individually prescribed devices (wheelchairs, hearing aids or communication devices) or to provide services of a personal nature (such as assistance in eating, toileting or dressing) unless providing such services are part of the services offered by the program. This does not preclude the Department from providing appropriate auxiliary aids and services to ensure accessibility.

9. Maintenance of Accessible Features.

The Department must ensure that equipment and accessibility features of facilities are in good working order and accessible to individuals with disabilities. Isolated or temporary interruptions in access due to maintenance and repair of accessible features are acceptable.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR FACILITY ACCESS?

The Niagara Department of Social Services must ensure that all of its programs, services and activities are accessible to individuals with disabilities. One key aspect of that is facilities access.

1. New Construction or Alteration of Existing Buildings.

This does not apply to the Department as the county is not contemplating any new construction. However, generally, any facility or part of a facility that is constructed by a state or local government entity must be constructed in strict compliance with applicable federal and state building accessibility codes and regulations, so that it is readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities.

In accordance with all applicable accessibility codes, when alterations affect the usability of a facility, the altered portion (as well as the path of travel, toilets, drinking fountains, and public phones) must be made accessible to people with disabilities.

2. Overall Program Access.

The Department is not necessarily required to make every pre-ADA facility fully compliant with current accessibility codes. However, all Department programs, services or activities must be accessible to, and usable by, people with disabilities when viewed in their entirety. This is called "overall program access."

Overall program accessibility can be achieved a number of ways. Structural options include altering existing County facilities or constructing new ones.

Nonstructural options include:

- Acquisition or redesign of equipment
- Assignment of aides to assist individuals with disabilities
- Provision of services at alternate accessible sites

The Department must give priority to the option that results in the most integrated setting appropriate to

encourage interaction among all users, including those with disabilities.

3. The Department's Policy and Procedure.

- If a building or part of a building where the Department services are provided is not physically accessible, the Department must take steps to ensure that the individual is provided meaningful access to services through some other means.

- At the Department's 10th Street location in Niagara Falls, the restrooms in the public areas are not wheelchair/handicap accessible. If a person with a disability asks for a handicap accessible restroom, the clerical staff must accompany the client to the restrooms in the "secure" employee areas that are wheelchair/handicap accessible. The staff person should wait outside for the person and accompany the client back to waiting or interview room.

- At the Department's Lockport location, a number of handicapped parking spaces are located in the parking lot off of the employee's entrance. The employee entrance may be used for people with a disability. If a person with a disability uses the employee entrance, staff must accompany the client to the front desk.

- All questions regarding building accommodations must be given to the supervisor who will submit them in writing to Deputy Commissioner (with a copy to the Director). The Deputy Commissioner will then forward the request to Niagara County Buildings and Grounds Department for consideration and response.

WHAT ARE THE ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS?

1. ADA Coordinator.

Under Title II of the ADA, all public entities must designate a person or persons whose job it is to mediate complaints and to ensure compliance with the ADA and other disability rights laws. The ADA Coordinator facilitates and supports the Department's compliance obligations; advises the public about the ADA and the Department's compliance obligations; and coordinates the investigation of grievances filed by the public alleging discrimination in Department programs, services, or activities.

The Niagara Department of Social Services has designated its Chief Counsel as the ADA Coordinator for Department programs that serve the public.

2. Notifications.

The Department has a specific notification form that must be provided to consumers as they receive and/or apply for services from the Department. This form is entitled "Notification under the Americans with Disabilities Act." A copy of this notice is posted in the waiting areas for each of our buildings. A copy is also attached hereto.

The staff is required to provide a copy of this notice to all people applying for or receiving services from this agency.

3. Grievances.

The Grievance Procedure was established to meet the requirements of the ADA. It was adopted for resolving grievances arising under Title II of the ADA. It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the Department.

The County's Personnel Policy governs employment-related complaints of disability discrimination.

Staff is required to notify consumers of their right to a grievance procedure. This notification can be found attached hereto, entitled "Grievance Procedures Under the Americans with Disabilities Act." This form provides specific

information regarding the process for which a grievance may be filed and the time frames associated with each grievance as well as an appeals process.

4. Grievance Procedure.

This procedure shall be utilized anytime an applicant for or recipient of benefits or services offered or administered by the Department requests to file a grievance concerning a disability or problem due to their limited proficiency in the English language.

- All caseworkers and any employee who has routine contact with applicants or recipients of benefits or services offered or administered by the Department shall be familiar with the "ADA GRIEVANCE FORM" (a copy of which is attached) and shall provide a copy of such form to any applicant or recipient who requests to file a grievance based upon a disability.

- Anyone receiving a completed form shall immediately forward the form to the Chief Counsel who shall act as the ADA compliance officer.

- Within five (5) business days of receipt of a completed form the ADA compliance officer, or his/her designee, shall send a written acknowledgment of receipt of the form to the person who has submitted the grievance. At this time, if the compliance officer believes that additional information is required from the grievant in order to properly review the grievance, he/she shall request such additional information from the grievant. Such request should be as specific as possible in identifying what additional information is needed.

- Within five (5) business days of the receipt of a completed form the compliance officer shall forward a copy of the completed form to the director of the program where the grievance originated.

- Upon receipt of a completed Form from the compliance officer, the program director shall review the grievance and make a report to the compliance officer within fifteen (15) working days. Such report shall confirm or deny any facts alleged in the completed Form and shall contain the recommendation of the director of what corrective action, if any, is recommended. If the director disagrees with the allegations contained in the Form he/she shall inform the compliance officer of the basis for his/her disagreement with the information contained in the completed Form.

- Upon receipt of the response from the program director the compliance officer shall review the contents of such response and make an independent determination of whether the grievance should be sustained or denied.

- Within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the response of the program director the compliance officer shall notify the grievant of his/her decision that the grievance is either sustained or denied.

- In the event the compliance officer shall sustain the grievance he/she shall notify the grievant of what remedial action is being taken.

- A copy of the determination of the compliance officer shall be forwarded to the program director and shall be included in the program file of the grievant.

5. For additional information, please contact the ADA Coordinator:

Thomas W. Scirto
Chief Counsel
20 East Avenue
P.O. Box 506
Lockport, New York 14095
Telephone: (716) 439-7606
Facsimile: (716) 439-7609
E-Mail: Tom.Scirto@niagaracounty.com

POLICY NOTICE

SPECIAL RIGHTS OF APPLICANTS OR RECIPIENTS OF BENEFITS WHO ARE DISABLED OR HAVE LIMITED PROFICIENCY IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

THE LAW SAYS: "NO QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY SHALL, BY REASON OF SUCH DISABILITY, BE EXCLUDED FROM PARTICIPATION IN OR BE DENIED THE BENEFITS OF THE SERVICES, PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES OF A PUBLIC ENTITY, OR BE SUBJECTED TO DISCRIMINATION BY ANY SUCH ENTITY."

(Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.).

If you have a disability covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act or you have limited English language proficiency and you are applying for or receiving benefits from the Department of Social Services, you have options available to you. For example:

- You can tell the worker about any disability you have, if you want to.
- If you don't want to, you do not have to tell anyone about your disability.
- You can ask for an individual assessment of your disability or special needs.
- If you can't speak or read English, you are entitled to help in your own language.
- You can get assistance in completing the application forms.
- If you can't read the forms, they will be read to you.
- If you can't write, someone will write down your answers.
- If you don't understand the forms, ask about them and they will be explained to you.
- You can get special help so you can fully participant in our programs.
- If your interviewer believes you have a disability, he or she has to offer you a special ADA interview.

Please give the worker accurate answers to any questions about your disability.

RIGHT TO FILE GRIEVANCE:

If you believe you have been treated unfairly because of your disability or because people think you have a disability or because of language problems, you can file grievance at any time. You can get an "ADA GRIEVANCE FORM" from your caseworker or any worker who reviews applications.



NIAGARA COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
P.O. BOX 506
LOCKPORT, NEW YORK 14095-0506

NIAGARA FALLS OFFICE
P.O. BOX 865
301 TENTH STREET
NIAGARA FALLS, NY 14302-0865

TROTT ACCESS CENTER
1001 11TH STREET
NIAGARA FALLS, NY 14301

"We Help Families"

ADA GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

This procedure shall be utilized anytime an applicant for or recipient of benefits or services offered or administered by the Department requests to file a grievance concerning a disability or problem due to their limited proficiency in the English language.

1. All caseworkers and any employee who has routine contact with applicants or recipients of benefits or services offered or administered by the Department shall be familiar with the "ADA GRIEVANCE FORM" and shall provide a copy of such form to any applicant or recipient who requests to file a grievance based upon a disability.

2. Anyone receiving a completed form shall immediately forward the form to the Chief Counsel who shall act as the ADA compliance officer.

3. Within five (5) business days of receipt of a completed form the ADA compliance officer, or his/her designee, shall send a written acknowledgment of receipt of the form to the person who has submitted the grievance. At this time, if the compliance officer believes that additional information is required from the grievant in order to properly review the grievance, he/she shall request such additional information from the grievant. Such request should be as specific as possible in identifying what additional information is needed.

4. Within five (5) business days of the receipt of a completed form the compliance officer shall forward a copy of the completed form to the director of the program where the grievance originated.

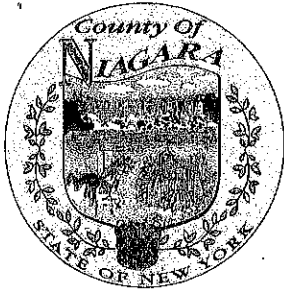
5. Upon receipt of a completed form from the compliance officer, the program director shall review the grievance and make a report to the compliance officer within fifteen (15) working days. Such report shall confirm or deny any facts alleged in the completed Form and shall contain the recommendation of the director of what corrective action, if any, is recommended. If the director disagrees with the allegations contained in the Form he/she shall inform the compliance officer of the basis for his/her disagreement with the information contained in the completed Form.

6. Upon receipt of the response from the program director the compliance officer shall review the contents of such response and make an independent determination of whether the grievance should be sustained or denied.

7. Within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the response of the program director the compliance officer shall notify the grievant of his/her decision that the grievance is either sustained or denied.

8. In the event the compliance officer shall sustain the grievance he/she shall notify the grievant of what remedial action is being taken.

9. A copy of the determination of the compliance officer shall be forwarded to the program director and shall be included in the program file of the grievant.



NIAGARA COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
P.O. BOX 506
LOCKPORT, NEW YORK 14095-0506

NIAGARA FALLS OFFICE
P.O. BOX 865
301 TENTH STREET
NIAGARA FALLS, NY 14302-0865

TROTT ACCESS CENTER
1001 11TH STREET
NIAGARA FALLS, NY 14301

"We Help Families"

ADA GRIEVANCE FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ CASE NO.: _____

PROGRAM YOU ARE COMPLAINING ABOUT: (Circle One)

TANF FOOD STAMPS MEDICAID HEAP OTHER: _____

EXPLAIN YOUR GRIEVANCE:

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

TODAY'S DATE: _____

SIGNATURE

Return this form to your caseworker or mail to:

Thomas W. Scirto
Chief Counsel
NCDSS
P.O. Box 506
Lockport, New York 14095

INTERPRETERS

The Department maintains contracts with the following agencies/people:

Name	Language	Telephone Number
Adele Abilmona	Arabic	(716) 380-7307
Norma Chavez	Spanish	(716) 531-5036
Deaf Adult Services	Sign Language	(716) 883-1637
Luz Horn	Spanish	(716) 622-6209
William Horn	Spanish	(716) 622-8100
Natalie Medvedeva	Russian	(716) 633-7439
Maria Pagliei	Spanish	(716) 439-0302
Valentina Tumash	Russian	(716) 731-9844
International Institute of Buffalo	Various	(716) 883-1900

DID YOU KNOW?

If you have a physical, mental health, or learning problem that makes it very difficult for you to:

- Come to DSS appointments
- Fill out an application for benefits
- Do other things DSS says you have to do

You may have a right to get help from DSS

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects people who are disabled by:

- depression
- other mental health problems
- learning problems
- mental retardation
- drug or alcohol problems
- asthma
- problems walking, standing or sitting
- HIV/AIDS and other serious illnesses
- other health conditions

People with these problems may have a right to:

- help with applications and program rules
- home visits
- more time to do things within program requirements
- fewer office appointments
- be excused from work activities
- help asking for a grievance or fair hearing
- other types of accommodations

If you need one of these things, ask your worker or the receptionist at your Center.

If you ask for one of these things and don't get it, you can file an **ADA grievance**. To do this, you can telephone, mail or fax a simple complaint to:

**ADA Compliance Officer
Niagara County DSS
20 East Avenue
Lockport, NY 14094
Phone: (716) 439-7604
Fax: (716) 439-7609**

If **DSS** sends you a notice of intent to reduce your benefits or close your case, you have a right to request a Fair Hearing. Simply filing an ADA grievance may not stop a reduction of benefits or case closing.