



Vannessa L. Dorantes
Commissioner

DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES
Making a Difference for Children, Families and Communities



Ned Lamont
Governor

Memorandum

To: All Staff

From: Commissioner Vannessa Dorantes

Date: 12/4/20

Re: Americans with Disabilities Act for Clients in Child Protective Services

PURPOSE

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is committed to providing and promoting equal opportunities in all of its activities and services. This commitment includes following the mandates for the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), a federal law that it makes it unlawful to discriminate against a qualified person with a disability in all aspects of the employment process and in the provision of services and benefits. DCF also observes all Connecticut laws and regulations that apply to individuals with disabilities.

DCF strictly prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Further, it is the policy of DCF not to exclude persons with a disability from participation in any program or activity. Accordingly, it is the policy of DCF to provide access to all of its programs, services and facilities to persons with disabilities in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

WHAT IS A DISABILITY UNDER THE ADA?

Under the ADA, an individual with a disability is any person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

DCF will reasonably accommodate the known physical and mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability, unless the accommodation would impose an undue burden. DCF will make every reasonable effort to determine and provide the appropriate reasonable accommodation to a qualified individual upon request. DCF, in its discretion, may require the individual to provide additional information about his or her disability or limitations and the need for the accommodation. The ADA does not require DCF to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its program or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

HOW TO REQUEST AN ACCOMMODATION

Qualified individuals with a disability in child protection matters are entitled to individual assessments of their needs and full and equal access to opportunities to benefit from and participate in child welfare programs, services and activities that are equal to those extended to persons without disabilities. DCF may impose legitimate safety requirements for the safe operation of its services, programs or activities. DCF may also determine that in some cases, a parent with a disability or a proposed placement resource with a disability, may not be appropriate for child placement because he or she poses a significant risk to the health or safety of the child that cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation.

Qualified individuals with disabilities in child protection matters who believe that they qualify for a reasonable accommodation should contact the local DCF office or Facility staff assigned to the case. Contact should be made to the assigned social worker, supervisor and program supervisor and office director.

COMPLAINTS

Individuals involved with the Department who believe their ADA accommodations are not being addressed, should request a meeting with the Regional Office or Facility team involved with their family to resolve the matter. If resolution is not achieved, an inquiry can be made to the Office of Community Relations at (860) 550-6301.

NO RETALIATION

DCF strictly forbids retaliation against individuals who request an accommodation or otherwise exercise their rights under the ADA or Connecticut law. Agents of DCF shall not retaliate against, coerce, intimidate, threaten, harass or interfere with any individual exercising or enjoying his or her rights under the ADA or Connecticut law or because an individual aided or encouraged any other individual in the exercise of rights granted or protected by the ADA or Connecticut law.