

MEMORANDUM

To: All Staff
From: Joette Katz, Commissioner
Date: September 23, 2016



AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

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 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

(1) EMPLOYEES AND APPLICANTS

Qualified employees or applicants with disabilities may request an accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of their jobs or to gain access to the hiring process. Requests should be made to DCF Human Resources.

(2) CLIENTS IN CHILD PROTECTION MATTERS

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 assigned to the case. Contact should be made to the assigned social worker, supervisor and program manager.

COMPLAINTS

(1) EMPLOYEES AND APPLICANTS

Complaints that a request for accommodation by an employee or applicant has been denied should be made to Debi Freund, Director, Office of Diversity and Equity by phone: (860) 550-6303 or email Debi.Freund@ct.gov.

(2) CLIENTS RECEIVING CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

Complaints that a request for accommodation by a client receiving child protection services has been denied should be made to Ken Mysogland, Ombudsman by phone (860) 550-6364 or e-mail Ken.Mysogland@ct.gov.

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.