



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services

Commissioner's Policy Statement and Implementing Procedures

SUBJECT:	Accessibility To Services, Programs, Facilities & Activities
P & P NUMBER:	Chapter 2.20
APPROVED:	Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Commissioner Date: 10/15/2015
EFFECTIVE DATE:	October 15, 2015 <i>Miriam Delphin-Rittmon</i>
REVISED:	1/4/2011, 7/15/1997
REFERENCES:	28 C.F.R. PART 35 - Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. 45 C.F.R PART 84 – Nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Rehabilitation Act (hereafter “Section 504”). 2.19 Internal Discrimination Grievance Procedure
FORMS AND ATTACHMENTS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADA Poster • Appendix A - Client Right’s Officers by Facility • Appendix B – Equal Employment Opportunity Specialists by Facility

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: To outline the requirements of facilities of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (hereafter “DMHAS”) in regards to their responsibilities pursuant to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (hereafter “ADA”) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (hereafter “Section 504”).

POLICY: The Americans with Disabilities Act was enacted in 1990 and is a comprehensive federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and requires reasonable accommodations or program modifications to assure that all people, including people with disabilities, have an equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from employment, services, and activities provided by a public entity. Title II of the A.D.A. requires public entities, including state agencies such as the DMHAS to provide equal access to all its services, programs, facilities and activities and to provide these services, programs, facilities and activities in the most integrated setting possible. The A.D.A. contains numerous other requirements for public entities. The DMHAS’s procedure for meeting these requirements is set out below. The DMHAS is committed to ensuring that its programs, services, facilities, and activities are accessible to persons with

disabilities, including persons with hearing or sight impairments, through the identification and elimination of architectural, attitudinal, employment and other barriers.

PROCEDURE: The DMHAS and its facilities will promote and support the recruitment and employment of persons with disabilities, as staff members, volunteers, and members of facility committees, and to participate in program planning. These hiring practices comply with the Equal Employment Opportunity regulations, Affirmative Action Plan, Section 504 and the ADA.

The DMHAS will provide information on Title II of the ADA's requirements to applicants, participants, beneficiaries, and other interested persons. The notice shall explain the applicability of the ADA and Section 504 to DMHAS services, programs and activities. The DMHAS shall provide such information as the head of the agency or program determines to be necessary to inform individuals of the ADA and Section 504's prohibitions against discrimination and provisions for requesting modifications and/or filing a complaint.

The DMHAS, as a public entity that employs 50 or more people, shall designate at least one employee to serve as its ADA Coordinator. The DMHAS ADA coordinator shall coordinate the agency's efforts to comply with and fulfill its responsibilities under the ADA and Section 504, including the investigation of complaints.

The DMHAS will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services, and activities. For example, individuals with service animals are welcomed in DMHAS offices, even where pets are generally prohibited. All programs, services, and activities shall be provided in the most integrated setting possible. Employees, visitors, etc who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of the DMHAS should contact the Affirmative Action Office while patients and family will contact the Client Right's Officer. The ADA does not require the DMHAS to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

There are two internal methods for filing grievances or complaints involving ADA. In the case of a job applicant or employee access is available through the DMHAS's Internal Discrimination Grievance Procedure 2.19 on form #AA-100. In the case of a client or a conservator acting on behalf of the client, access is available through the Patient's Grievance Procedure. All other persons may contact the facility Chief Executive's Office for assistance.

The DMHAS and its facilities participate in community efforts to reduce social stigma and promote social and economic opportunities for persons with disabilities and promote community integration. Such efforts include outreach information and education for potential service recipients and the general public. Community forums such as television,

newspaper and disbursement of brochures and participation in health fairs are among the activities which are used.

Each facility will establish a process through which accessibility issues are addressed at each site. Each facility's Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for establishing the process to address barriers to accessibility. At a minimum the process will include input from the assigned Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist, the Client Rights Officer(s), and the facility Safety Director or designee. Other individuals may include a member of the community, the DMHAS Affirmative Action Advisory Committee, members, clients, or any person who possesses the expertise in identify and correcting these barriers. Minutes of meetings that address these issues will be retained by the facility's assigned Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist.

Individuals involved in the process will be given the authority and responsibility to provide substantive input into proposing remedies to eliminate these architectural barriers. On an annual basis a report will be developed identifying these barriers along with suggested remedies to improve access to programs and services available to persons with disabilities. This will include an assessment of issues of accessibility at each site and the development of a plan for the removal of physical barriers. Major changes that are identified as not feasible due to resource or finance issues shall be documented and an alternative plan developed.

The report will be composed of evaluations in three parts:

1. A survey of the facility's physical plant in comparison to the ADA standards shall be conducted.
2. A review of each facility with respect to its location, hours, availability of staff by phone and other pertinent elements.
3. A review of registered consumers and their needs with respect to accessibility and assistive technology, to be completed by program supervisors.

DMHAS facility Safety Directors and the Equal Employee Opportunity Specialists will conduct annual inspections of each facility covering Administrative and Employment components of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Annual Written Evaluation of Accessibility Inspection: All facility annual reports will be submitted to the Office of the Commissioner by August 1. The Commissioner shall appoint committee members to the Executive Accessibility Improvement Committee. This Committee will be responsible for reviewing each facility's annual report regarding accessibility. A summary report of the findings shall be developed along with recommendations and forwarded to the Commissioner's Executive Group for a final review and action. If corrective actions are required for any DMHAS facility, a timeline for corrective action will be stated in the final report. All reports of the Executive Accessibility Improvement Committee will be retained by the Affirmative Action Office and stored in compliance with state regulations.

The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, in keeping with its mission and purpose, will provide regular training to agency staff, through the Affirmative Action Office to familiarize them with basic expectations of the ADA and DMHAS' procedures for reviewing complaints or grievances.