



**U.S. Citizenship and
Immigration Services**

USCIS Policy Manual

Current as of March 19, 2020

Volume 1 - General Policies and Procedures

Part A - Public Services

Chapter 6 - Disability Accommodation Requests

A. Background

USCIS accepts requests for accommodations from benefit requestors, other interested parties, and other persons with disabilities who use USCIS services and access USCIS facilities. Accommodation requests may be made in advance for instances that include, but are not limited to:

- An interview with an officer;
- an oath ceremony; or
- A USCIS-sponsored public event.

Accommodations ensure compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, ^[1] which states that “[n]o otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency.” ^[2]

B. Reasonable Accommodation

The essential feature of an accommodation is that it allows the person with a disability to participate in the process or activity. While USCIS is not required to make major modifications that would result in a fundamental change to the processes or cause an undue burden for the agency, USCIS makes every effort to provide accommodations to persons with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations vary, depending on the situation and the person’s disability.

Benefit requestors must satisfy all of the legal requirements to receive an immigration benefit; however, USCIS must provide reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities to afford them the opportunity to meet those requirements.

Examples of accommodations include, but are not limited to:

- Those unable to use their hands may be permitted to take a test orally rather than in writing;
- Those who are deaf or hard of hearing may be provided with a sign language interpreter for a USCIS-sponsored event; ^[3]
- Those unable to speak may be allowed to respond to questions in an agreed-upon nonverbal manner; ^[4]

- Those unable to travel to a designated USCIS location for an interview due to a disabling condition may be interviewed at their home or a medical facility.

C. Requesting Accommodation

1. How to Make a Disability Accommodation Request

To request disability accommodation for any phase of the application process, benefit requestors, other interested parties, and other persons with disabilities who use USCIS services and access USCIS facilities, should generally submit the request online using the [Disability Accommodations for Appointments](#) tool. ^[5] Requestors should submit accommodation requests to USCIS as soon as they are aware of the need for an accommodation for a particular event. The more advance notice USCIS has, the more likely it will be able to make arrangements for the accommodation request. ^[6]

2. USCIS Points-of-Contact

To ensure accountability, each field office, application support center (ASC), or asylum office must designate at least one employee to be responsible for handling accommodation requests. All employees should be aware of the procedures for handling such requests.

If a requestor contacts the field office, ASC, or asylum office directly to request a disability accommodation for an interview, the office may enter a service request into the Service Request Management Tool (SRMT) to work with the requestor to respond to the request, and mark the request as fulfilled when it is complete so that the request and the response are recorded.

Offices are encouraged to provide reasonable accommodation requests made by walk-ins whenever practical. If the accommodation is not available, the office should inform the requestor that the office is not able to provide the accommodation at that time, but that arrangements can be made to provide the accommodation for a future appointment or event.

3. USCIS Review

USCIS evaluates each request for a reasonable accommodation on a case-by-case basis. The Public Disability Access Coordinator must generally concur on any alternative accommodation offered or any accommodation denial before the office communicates either action to the requestor.

While a requestor is not required to include documentation of a medical condition in support of a reasonable accommodation request, an office may need documentation to evaluate the request in rare cases. In these situations, the office must consult the Public Disability Access Coordinator for guidance before the USCIS office requests medical documentation to support an accommodation request.

4. Review Timeframe

In general, the affected USCIS office determines whether it may reasonably comply with the accommodation request within 7 calendar days of receiving the request, unless unusual circumstances exist.

If an accommodation is warranted, it should be provided on the date and time of the scheduled event; rescheduling should be avoided, if possible. If an accommodation cannot be provided for the originally scheduled event, the requestor should be notified as soon as possible. Any rescheduling should occur within a reasonable period of time.

5. Reconsideration of Denied Request

To request a reconsideration of a denial of a disability accommodation request, the requestor should call the USCIS Contact Center and provide any new information they have in support of their request. Upon receiving the request, the relevant office must review the prior request and any additional information provided. The office should contact the requestor if additional information is needed.

Generally, all affirmed denials must be approved by the Public Disability Access Coordinator, the field office director, ASC manager, or asylum office director, whichever applies.

Footnotes

1. [△] See [Pub. L. 93-112 \(PDF\)](#), (September 26, 1973).
2. [△] See Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, [Pub. L. 93-112 \(PDF\)](#), 87 Stat. 355, 394 (September 26, 1973), codified at [29 U.S.C. 794\(a\)](#). See [6 CFR 15.3](#) for applicable definitions relating to enforcement of nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in Department of Homeland Security (DHS) federal programs or activities, which includes those conducted by USCIS.
3. [△] This applies to any member of the public who wants to attend the event, such as a naturalization ceremony or an outreach engagement.
4. [△] Offices should understand that, while the inability to speak is considered a disability under the Rehabilitation Act, the inability to speak the English language (while being able to speak a foreign language) is not considered a disability under the Act. Therefore, no accommodation is required and one should not be provided if a requestor is unable to speak English. No request for an interpreter should be approved unless the requestor is otherwise eligible. See, for example, [8 CFR 312.4](#).
5. [△] Certain categories of applicants, such as asylum and NACARA 203 applicants, cannot submit their request online. These applicants should call the USCIS Contact Center at 1-800-375-5283 (TTY: 1-800-767-1833). For additional instructions on how to submit a disability accommodation request, see the [Requesting Accommodations for Disabilities](#) web page.
6. [△] For more information on service requests, see Chapter 4, Service Request Management Tool [[1 USCIS-PM A.4](#)]. For information on handling disability accommodations related to asylum cases, see Chapter 7, Privacy and Confidentiality, Section F, Asylees and Refugees, Subsection 3, USCIS Assistance [[1 USCIS-PM A.7\(E\)](#)].

Legal Authorities

[29 U.S.C. 701](#) - Rehabilitation Act

[INA 103](#), [8 CFR 103](#) - Powers and duties of the Secretary, the Under Secretary, and the Attorney General

Forms

[I-864P, Poverty Guidelines](#)

Appendices

No appendices available at this time.

Technical Update - Replacing the Term “Foreign National”

October 08, 2019

This technical update replaces all instances of the term "foreign national with alien" throughout the Policy Manual as used to refer to a person who meets the definition provided in INA 101(a)(3) ["any person not a citizen or national of the United States"].

[Read More](#)

AFFECTED SECTIONS

1 USCIS-PM - Volume 1 - General Policies and Procedures

2 USCIS-PM - Volume 2 - Nonimmigrants

6 USCIS-PM - Volume 6 - Immigrants

7 USCIS-PM - Volume 7 - Adjustment of Status

8 USCIS-PM - Volume 8 - Admissibility

9 USCIS-PM - Volume 9 - Waivers

10 USCIS-PM - Volume 10 - Employment Authorization

11 USCIS-PM - Volume 11 - Travel and Identity Documents

12 USCIS-PM - Volume 12 - Citizenship and Naturalization

POLICY ALERT - USCIS Public Services

May 10, 2019

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is updating policy guidance in the USCIS Policy Manual regarding services USCIS provides to the public, including general administration of certain immigration benefits, online tools, and up-to-date information.

[Read More](#)

AFFECTED SECTIONS

1 USCIS-PM A - Part A - Public Services

POLICY ALERT - Customer Service

August 26, 2014

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is issuing policy guidance on its standards in customer service.

[Read More](#)

AFFECTED SECTIONS

1 USCIS-PM A - Part A - Public Services

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