

Regulatory Requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Federally-conducted)

The regulations that implement Section 504 (federally-conducted) (7 C.F.R. Part 15e) apply to applicants for USDA employment, USDA employees, as well as to others through all programs and activities provided directly by USDA. Section 504 requires that the USDA:

- Afford a qualified individual with a disability an opportunity to participate in or benefit from an aid, program, or service in a manner that is equal to that afforded an individual with a disability,
- Allow individuals with disabilities the opportunity to participate as a member of planning or advisory boards,
- Administer programs and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities,
- Conduct a Self-evaluation of current policies and practices and their effects to assure compliance with Section 504,
- Provide Notice of Nondiscrimination to employees, applicants for services, participants, beneficiaries, and other interested individuals,
- Ensure program accessibility (operate each program or activity so that the program or activity, when viewed in its entirety, is readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities),
- Ensure that all new construction or major alterations to buildings and facilities include design features to make it “readily accessible” to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities,
- Ensure “effective communication” with applicants, participants, other interested individuals (auxiliary aids and services), and
- Ensure Compliance Procedures (complaint processing and compliance reviews).