

## Glossary of Disability and National Service Related Terms

**ADA Information Line:** The Department of Justice's toll-free hotline. Call to obtain answers to general and technical questions about the ADA and to order technical assistance materials: 800-514-0301 (voice) 800-514-0383 (TTY)

**ADA, Americans with Disabilities Act, 1991:** Provides civil rights protection to people with disabilities and guarantees those covered by the law equal opportunity in employment, state and local government services, transportation, places of public accommodation, and telecommunications services.

**Alternative Formats:** A version of a document that has been converted to ensure that people with disabilities are provided with equal access to information. Examples: text files on a computer disk, large print, books on tape, Braille.

**AmeriCorps:** National service program that engages thousands of Americans, age 17 and over, in community service and provides education awards and a small living allowance in exchange for that service. AmeriCorps website: [www.AmeriCorps.org](http://www.AmeriCorps.org).

**Appropriate Heights:** Refers to legal requirements to install items such as water fountains, bathroom amenities, telephones at heights that enable their use by people who use wheelchairs.

**Assistive Technology Device:** "Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether required commercially off the shelf, modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capacities of individuals with disabilities." (Taken from the Technology Related assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988)

**Assistive Technology Service:** "Any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. Service includes evaluation of need; selection, purchase; coordination of related services; training and technical assistance."

**Barriers:** Obstacles that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society.

**Attitudinal Barriers:** Attitudes, fears and assumptions that prevent people with and without disabilities from meaningfully interacting with one another.

**Physical Barriers:** Physical obstacles that hinder people with physical disabilities from gaining access.



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**Barrier-free Design:** An approach to design that aims for buildings, transportation systems, and outdoor environments that people with disabilities can access and use independently and safely. (see universal design)

**Centers for Independent Living (CILS) :** Community based, consumer controlled, not-for-profit centers governed by a board of directors of whom at least 51% are people with disabilities. Services provided include: peer counseling, information and referral, independent living skills training, and advocacy.

**Consumer:** A term sometimes used for people with disabilities instead of patient or client to suggest their entitlement to an active role and quality service.

**Corporation for National Service:** Established in 1993 under the National and Community Service Act. It gives more than a million United States citizens opportunities to improve communities through service. The Corporation supports service at the national, state , and local levels, overseeing three main initiatives: AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and National Senior Service Corps. CNS website: [www.cns.gov](http://www.cns.gov).

**Department of Justice:** Federal agency offers technical assistance on the ADA Standards for Accessible Design and other ADA provisions applying to businesses, non-profit service agencies, and state and local government programs; also provides information on how to file ADA complaints (see ADA Information line). Department of Justice website: [www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm).

**Developmentally Disabled:** Defined in law as a “severe and chronic disability” which is attributed to a mental or physical impairment or combination; is manifested before age 22; and results in substantial functional limitation in at least three major life activities. *Is sometimes used to refer to people who are diagnosed with mental retardation.*

**Disability, Person with a:** Legally defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as “ a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.

**Disability Benefits:** The Social Security Administration pays disability benefits under two programs: SSDI, and SSI. People who receive either of these benefits may risk losing them due to their participation in national service. The Work Incentives Program is one way that a participant may continue to receive benefits while serving.



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**Disability Organizations:** Organizations of and/or for people with disabilities and disability issues.

**Disability Rights Movement:** The collective efforts of advocates to secure equal rights, equal opportunities, and a barrier-free environment for people with disabilities

**Dynabox:** assistive technology device used for communication. The user presses buttons and the device "speaks".

**Educational Award:** Upon completion of a term of service AmeriCorps members receive this award which can be used to pay for higher education; some vocational programs; and to pay off existing or future student loans.

**Equal Opportunity Employment:** a legal term and federal requirement that employer's not discriminate because of factors unrelated to job qualifications including race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability.

**Essential Service Functions/Duties:** Functions like a job description, communicates the specific requirements of the participant in national service over the course of a service year. This information is essential for effectively determining the qualifications of an applicant as well as the reasonable accommodations that may be required. **Marginal Functions** are tasks that are not essential to the position. These may be adjusted or reassigned.

**Foster Grandparent Program:** One of the National Senior Corps programs; serves with youth and children with "exceptional needs". Foster grandparents are at least 60 years old; low-income; and receive a stipend in exchange for their service.

**Hidden Disability:** Most disabilities are not visible. Hidden disabilities include mental and cognitive disabilities, some hearing and visual impairments, alcoholism and addiction, Epilepsy, Diabetes, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

**Host Site:** where national service participant performs their service, for example, school, community center, or a non-profit organization.

**Inclusion:** The active engagement of people with disabilities in all levels of society. The presence of people with disabilities does not constitute inclusion unless people with disabilities are valued contributing members with a sense of belonging.



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**Independent Living Movement:** Advocacy movement which views the person with a disability as an active “consumer” of services and advocates for personal independence, barrier removal, equal rights and opportunities, and consumer choice and control.

**Institutional Segregation/ Institutionalization:** Until very recently many people with disabilities were removed from communities and put into institutions where they were denied self-determination and access to the opportunities of independent living, education, and livelihood.

**Learn and Serve America:** Helps support more than one million students from kindergarten through college who are meeting community needs while improving their academic skills and learning the habits of good citizenship

**Living Allowance:** AmeriCorps members receive a modest allowance for living expenses during their term of service.

**Medicaid:** Medicaid is a jointly-funded, Federal-State health insurance program for certain low-income and needy people. It covers approximately 36 million individuals including children, the aged, blind, and/or disabled, and people who are eligible to receive federally assisted income maintenance payments.

**Medicare:** Health insurance that covers some people with disabilities based on their work experience or the work experience of spouse or parent.

**Member:** Term used to refer to participants in AmeriCorps programs.

**Mobility Issues:** When people have to negotiate physical barriers to get around within a place or between places. Usually people with mobility issues have physical disabilities.

**National Service:** The term used for programs and services delivered as part of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, and the Domestic Service Act of 1973. Corporation for National Service programs that help meet the nation’s needs in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, and other human needs. Website: [www.nationalservice.org](http://www.nationalservice.org).

**National Service Fellowship Program:** Launched by the Corporation for National Service in 1997, involves a team of individual researchers who develop and promote models of quality service responsive to the needs of communities. The Goal of the program is to strengthen national service through continuous learning, new models, strong networks, and professional growth. Website: [www.cns.gov/jobs/fellowships](http://www.cns.gov/jobs/fellowships).



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**National Service Participant:** Individual who serves communities through one of the national service programs. Includes: AmeriCorps members, Senior Corps participants, Senior Companions, and RSVP volunteers.

**Outreach:** proactive method of making connections and getting information to people.

**Paratransit:** Paratransit is the “comparable service for people with disabilities who cannot use the regular service” that public entities that operate fixed-route services are required to provide. Whether or not the services provided are comparable determines whether paratransit is considered an effective accommodation or another barrier (“separate but unequal,” see *No Pity* by Joseph P. Shapiro)

**Participants:** A person, with or without a disability, who is either a provider or a recipient of national service.

**People-First Language:** Most disability organizations advocate putting the person first when speaking of people with disabilities. For example: “person with a disability” instead of “disabled person”; “people with disabilities” instead of “the disabled”; “she is a wheelchair user” instead of “she is wheel chair bound” or “she is in a wheelchair”.

**Personal Assistance Services (PAS):** Consumer-directed basic ancillary services which enable with a physical, mental or sensory disability to live in his/her home and community and carry out functions of daily living, self-care and mobility.

**Program Accessibility:** Central requirement/standard under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 which requires that recipients of federal funds or contracts and /or state and local government entities operate programs and activities so that “when viewed in its entirety” such a program/activity is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.”

**Qualified Person with a Disability:** A legal term defined under ADA and Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as “an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the employment position that such individual holds or desires,”



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**Reasonable Accommodation:** Legal term defined by ADA and Rehabilitation Acts as “ any modification or adjustment to a job or work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to perform essential job functions.” Example include: restructuring a job; modifying work schedules; acquiring or modifying work equipment; and, providing qualified readers for persons who are blind or American Sign Language(ASL) interpreters for individuals who are deaf.

**RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program):** One of the National Senior Corps programs. This program has neither an income level nor number of service hours requirement.

**Self-Advocacy:** Refers to a national movement of people with disabilities speaking and advocating for themselves. There are self-advocacy organizations throughout the United States.

**Self-Identify:** To identify oneself as a person with a disability.

**Service:** A form of community-based volunteerism that is encouraged and supported by the federal government through national service programs.

**Service-Learning:** a method by which individuals improve academic learning and develop personal skills through structured service projects that meet community needs. The Corporation for National Service supports service-learning initiatives in grades K-12 and in higher education through the Learn and Serve America program.

**Service Provider Agency:** Agencies that provide services to people with disabilities.

**Simulation:** A form of disability awareness training that is opposed by some people with disabilities and used by others. Trainers use props like blindfolds, earplugs and wheelchairs to give participants the experience of a disability.

**Social Security:** Refers to federal assistance administered by the Social Security Administration. Phone: 800-772-1213 (voice); 800-325-0778 (TTY). Website: [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

**SSDI:** Social Security Disability Income: Available to individuals who have a work history (or are the child or widow of insured) and due to disability are no longer able to work.



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**SSI:** The supplementary Security Income program is a nationwide federal assistance program administered by the Social Security Administration that guarantees a minimum level of income for adults and children with a disability who have no work history since childhood.

**Stereotype:** A simplified conventional idea or image.

**Stipend:** A small amount of money offered to participants in AmeriCorps\*VISTA and Foster Grandparent programs in exchange for service.

**Transportation Barriers:** The absence of accessible dependable affordable transportation

**Universal Design:** Extends the idea of barrier-free design to cover the needs of all members of society, including children and seniors.

**AmeriCorps\*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America):** “Members live and serve in low-income neighborhoods, reaching out to residents and developing local leadership to create sustainable change.”

**Vocational Rehabilitation Program:** Each state has a program to assist people with disabilities in finding and keeping employment. A list of offices can be found at this website: [www.ssa.gov/work/serviceproviders/rehabproviders2.html](http://www.ssa.gov/work/serviceproviders/rehabproviders2.html).

**Voice Recognition:** Assistive technology software that allows people to write and command equipment using their voice rather than their hands. This technology has been used to accommodate people with a variety of disabilities. Many oral historians who do not qualify for reasonable accommodation are avidly awaiting the further development and improvement of this technology.

**Work Incentives Program :** Options for people who are receiving disability benefits and want to enter the work or service force without immediately losing all their financial security. For more information contact Social Security Administration. Website: [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

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