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Reasonable Accommodation Toolkit

Purpose

This document provides guidance for Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) employees for gathering resources to assist in the reasonable accommodation process. This document outlines processes for employees to start their conversation with the Indiana State Personnel Department (INSPD) and their supervisor. This document does not supersede [the reasonable accommodation policy](#) implemented by the INSPD.

Scope

This document applies to all employees and contractors working within all FSSA divisions, business units, and functional areas therein.

Definitions

- **Accessibility barriers:** Architectural design of a building (e.g., stairs, doorways, hallway width, layout of room, etc.) which present additional barriers for people with disabilities.
- **Assistive technology:** Refers to software programs, or software components of AT that help people with disabilities perform their job duties tasks.
- **Business unit:** Refers to all divisions, offices, and teams of staff who may not have a designated division.
- **Disability:** The [ADA defines a disability](#) as a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. A person with a record or history of having a disability, or an individual who is perceived as having a disability is also covered under this definition.
- **Ergonomic devices:** Refers to any equipment, technology, and/or tools designed to help people perform tasks efficiently, safely, and without discomfort or fatigue.
- **INSPD:** Refers to any employee who is employed as a representative for FSSA as human resources or staff who are employed by the Indiana State Personnel Department.
- **Reasonable accommodation:** Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a [reasonable accommodation](#) is a modification or adjustment to a job, work environment, or the way things are usually done during the hiring process. These modifications enable an individual with a disability to have an equal opportunity to successfully perform their job tasks to the same extent as people without disabilities. Accommodations can be different for each employee and should be based on their individual needs.
- **Supervisor:** Refers to business unit directors, managers, and all other staff who supervise, lead, or oversee other staff.



FAQs

I think I need a reasonable accommodation. What should I do?

Any employee who needs an accommodation should consult the INSPD [reasonable accommodation policy](#). The policy details state-wide accommodation procedures and outlines the responsibilities for employees, supervisors, and INSPD. Employees referencing the policy will also learn the definitions that are used in the interactive process.

Does my business unit provide reasonable accommodations?

Yes, all FSSA business units provide reasonable accommodations. Accommodations can be different for each employee and should be based on their individual needs. Therefore, you should contact your supervisor to start the process as detailed in the INSPD [reasonable accommodation policy](#).

What should I expect from my business unit and supervisor?

An employee can request a reasonable accommodation during the interview process, the onboarding process, or at any point in their career. Employees may request accommodations verbally or in writing. Supervisors cannot directly inquire about your disability and medical condition leading to the request. They may, however, inquire about how the reasonable accommodation will assist in mitigating the disability that is affecting your work productivity. Reasonable accommodations are private information and should only be disclosed to the supervisor and INSPD. The FSSA ADA Coordinator is available to assist at any time during the accommodation process to address inquiries, facilitate conversations, and provide support.

How will an accommodation affect a promotion?

An employee's disability and/or approved accommodation cannot be grounds to deny a promotion if the employee is otherwise qualified to perform the job duties. If you believe this has occurred, this information should be reported to INSPD and the FSSA ADA Coordinator.

What will happen to existing accommodations during a job change?

If an employee with an existing accommodation changes jobs, supervisors, and/or transfers to another FSSA business unit:

- The employee's previous supervisor should schedule a meeting with the employee and their new supervisor to discuss current accommodations.
- The employee's new supervisor will work with the employee and their business unit's INSPD representative to identify accommodations for the new position following the INSPD reasonable accommodation policy.
- It is the employee's responsibility to indicate whether the current or adjusted accommodations meet their needs. They may also choose to perform the new role without accommodations.

Any employee experiencing a job change to a state agency other than FSSA should review the INSPD [reasonable accommodation policy](#) and contact their new employer for more information.

Which accommodation is right for me?

As part of the interactive process outlined in the INSPD [reasonable accommodation policy](#), you will explore what type of accommodation may be needed to assist you in performing your job duties and/or increasing your work productivity. The following are some additional steps that may help you identify the best accommodation to fit your need.

Consult with your physician or another medical professional

You may reach out to your medical professional to discuss your diagnosis and any possible accommodations they think might help alleviate your condition(s). Your medical professional can talk openly with you about your disability and how it impacts your productivity. If applicable, INSPD can help you identify the appropriate medical professional in your care team who would be able to provide this information. Your medical professional may have a helpful perspective on how the lack of an accommodation will worsen any barriers you may be experiencing. This can provide you with information to share with your business unit's INSPD representative so they can better understand your accommodation needs as they relate to your specific job duties.

Visit the [Job Accommodation Network](#)

The Job Accommodation Network provides free and confidential guidance on job accommodations and disability employment issues. Visit www.askjan.org to learn more about reasonable accommodation success in a work setting. The following are examples of resources that you may locate on JAN.

- **Testimonies:** highlights testimonies from a variety of workplace environments demonstrating when accommodations were and were not successful. These experiences can provide you an idea of what accommodation options you may discuss when participating in the interactive process.
- **Disabilities and information about how they were handled in the workplace:** JAN offers information about a variety of strategies used to address workplace accommodations for different disabilities.
- **Disability updates in the workplace:** Offers legal and non-legal updates for individuals to remain up to date with accommodation trends and emerging technology available to the public.

Request an evaluation from an FSSA qualified evaluator

You can request an evaluation from an FSSA qualified evaluator. This evaluation will assess how to address your accommodation needs and answer questions about various options. Through the evaluation, you may have access to a specific type of accommodation on a temporary basis to learn if it is helpful in performing your job duties. FSSA often works with [Easterseals Crossroads](#) for this purpose.

Easterseals performs evaluations and operates an equipment loan library (INDATA) that assists employers, individuals with disabilities and their families to learn if a piece of equipment is appropriate for them. Examples of situations where an employee could test loan equipment from INDATA include:

- **Software:** An employee may have the option to test demos or other versions of computer software such as screen readers or computer magnifiers.
- **Ergonomic devices:** An employee may have the opportunity to test ergonomic tools such as keyboards, computer mice, and other ergonomic devices. They may also have desktop or handheld stand-alone devices that assist individuals in performing tasks, like larger computer monitors, standalone magnifying devices, or other aids.

Is a service animal a reasonable accommodation?

Yes, service animals can be granted as a reasonable accommodation under Title I of the ADA. Please consult your business unit's INSPD representative and refer to the [Service Animal Notice for FSSA Employees](#) before a service animal enters the property.

How can the Office of Healthy Opportunities assist me?

The Office of Healthy Opportunities (OHO) can discuss the reasonable accommodations process with you and connect you to the appropriate individuals in your agency who can help you. OHO offers guidance to support FSSA in becoming an inclusive, equitable, accessible, and diverse work environment. OHO can also direct employees and supervisors to approved trainings about accommodations, disability etiquette, and other topics. They can assist with questions or provide additional resources that may be helpful when preparing your accommodation request. The FSSA ADA Coordinator is also available to help you research accommodations and prepare you for having conversations about the accommodations you need.

What should I do if I encounter accessibility barriers?

If you encounter accessibility barriers when completing the needed forms to request an accommodation, please contact the INSPD email HRFSSA@fssa.in.gov and FSSA's ADA Coordinator at ada@fssa.in.gov. In this email, please explain what form you attempted to complete, what assistive technology you used to complete the form, and your experience. Try to be as detailed as possible. OHO and INSPD will identify an alternative process for completing the needed documentation. If you experience other accessibility barriers outside of this accommodation process, please refer to FSSA's [Accessibility Barrier Removal Procedure policy](#) for employees.

FSSA Accessibility Policies

- [Accessibility Barrier Removal Policy](#): Outlines process for removing architectural and digital barriers in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other applicable federal, state, and local laws.
- [Assistive Technology Software Tracking Policy](#): Documents policy for FSSA to maintain accurate and up-to-date software information for assistive technology used by employees.
- [Service Animal Notice for Employees](#): Documents FSSA policy for permitting animals in the workplace as a reasonable accommodation for employees.
- [Service Animal Notice for FSSA Visitors](#): Documents FSSA policy for permitting animals in the workplace as a reasonable accommodation for visitors.