

VIBS Family Violence and Rape Crisis Center ADA / Accommodations Policy

Policy:

VIBS values and embraces diversity and equal opportunity. VIBS is dedicated to offering welcoming programmatic, attitudinal, and physical environments that enable diverse populations to freely access our facility and its services. VIBS is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals with disabilities as proscribed by this law, whether they are clients, employees, or volunteers. Therefore, VIBS upholds and abides by its legal mandate to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities to have equal access to services and to provide reasonable accommodations to all qualified individuals.

Understanding disabilities and providing reasonable accommodations is not only a legal mandate but a priority for VIBS. The organization is committed to offering a full array of services to a wide range of users. Therefore, reasonable accommodations are made available upon request in order to offer equal access to individuals with disabilities who wish to avail themselves of any one or more of the services VIBS offers.

Purpose:

To ensure that no one will be denied access to the VIBS facility based on a disability, no client will be denied access to VIBS services based on a disability, and no employee and/or volunteer will be denied employment based on a disability; to guide staff in best practices in providing accommodations when requested.

Client Accommodation Request Procedures:

VIBS is committed to providing reasonable accommodations when requested by survivors with disabilities. Toward that end, VIBS staff is expected to follow the procedures as outlined below.

1. When a potential client or ongoing client requests an accommodation, staff will discuss the request with the client.
 - a. Discuss with the client the specific accommodations needed in order to facilitate service delivery.
 - b. Discuss all accommodation requests with VIBS supervisory / administrative staff.
 - c. If the accommodation request does not fall within the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accommodations guidelines, and VIBS deems it as a undue hardship to fulfill, alternative options will be explored that are in line with the original accommodation request.
 - d. If the request for accommodations is considered to be reasonable, then this request will be responded to within 2 business days.
 - i. A reasonable accommodation is any change or modification which can be made within a reasonable amount of time and money, and would enable an individual with disabilities equal access to VIBS services.
2. Prospective clients will be informed that in addition to physical plant accessibility and reasonable office modifications, various forms of assistive technology are also made available by VIBS.
 - a. I-pad 3 tablets equipped with the following applications are available to help facilitate communication with others:
 - i. Proloquo2go application – Provides a full-featured augmentative and alternative communication solution for people who have difficulty speaking. Features pictures, words, and text-to-speech capabilities.
 - ii. SoundAMP R application – Customizable sound amplifier. Use with headphones.
 - iii. VerbalVictor application – Customize speech-to-text symbols with your own pictures, sounds, and text
 - iv. Speak It! application – text-to-speech
 - v. AmpliVision – Offers 2X, 4X, 6X or 8X magnification levels using the autofocusing camera. Ideal for anyone who has trouble reading fine print or needs to see in greater detail.
 - b. A Chattervox device is also available for use which is a portable voice amplifier. It allows you to amplify your voice in any setting, from general conversation to speaking to a group.
 - c. A UbiDuo device is available for use which is a portable, wireless, battery-powered, stand-alone communication device that facilitates simultaneous face to face communication by means of two displays and two keyboards.
3. All VIBS staff will be trained on the above assistive technology devices and each will be available for use by any individual who may need them.
4. All assistive technology devices are stored in a locked cabinet in the Project SAFE project director's office.

- a. A sign in sign out form (see attached) will be utilized when any of these devices are being used by a client, staff member, or volunteer.
5. VIBS staff will continue to assess for the need for accommodations and respond to all requests for reasonable accommodations by all clients throughout their time receiving services at VIBS or throughout their employment / volunteer experience at VIBS.

Employee / Volunteer Accommodation Request Procedures:

VIBS is committed to providing reasonable accommodations when requested by qualified individuals who are seeking employment at VIBS. Toward that end, VIBS staff is expected to follow the procedures as outlined below.

1. When an applicant / employee /volunteer requests an adjustment or change in their working / employment environment for a reason related to a medical condition, administration will discuss the request with the applicant / employee / volunteer.
 - a. When the disability and / or the need for accommodation is not obvious, the employer may ask the *qualified individual*¹ for reasonable documentation about his/her disability and functional limitations.
 - i. Administration will speak with the applicant / employee / volunteer to inquire what the individual needs and to explore the appropriate reasonable accommodation.
 - ii. If the accommodation request does not fall within the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) reasonable accommodations guidelines, and VIBS deems it as a undue hardship to fulfill, alternative options will be explored that are in line with the original accommodation request.
 - iii. If the request for accommodations is considered to be reasonable, then this request will be responded to within 2 days.
 - b. *Reasonable accommodation*² is a modification or an adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions. Reasonable accommodation also includes adjustments to assure that a qualified individual with a disability has rights and privileges in employment equal to those of nondisabled employees.
2. VIBS staff will continue to assess for the need for accommodations and respond to all requests for reasonable accommodations by all qualified individuals with disabilities throughout their employment / volunteering experience at VIBS.

¹ Qualified individual is a person with a disability who meets legitimate skill, experience, education, or other requirements of an employment position that he or she holds or seeks, and who can perform the “essential functions” of the position with or without reasonable accommodation. Requiring the ability to perform “essential” functions assures that an individual will not be considered unqualified simply because of inability to perform marginal or incidental job functions. If the individual is qualified to perform essential job functions except for limitations caused by a disability, the employer must consider whether the individual could perform these functions with a reasonable accommodation. <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/adaqa1.html>

² Definition of reasonable accommodation was taken from the following link:
<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/adaqa1.html>

