

§ 707.9 Access to communications.

(a) Discrimination prohibited. Except as otherwise provided in this section, no qualified individual with disabilities shall, because the Agency's communications are inaccessible to or unusable by individuals with disabilities, be denied the benefits of, be excluded from participation in, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by the Agency.

(b) The Agency shall take appropriate steps to ensure effective communication with applicants, participants, personnel of other Federal entities, and members of the public.

(c) Specific requirements regarding oral communications—(1) Telecommunications devices for deaf persons. (i) The Agency headquarters and each regional office shall maintain and reliably answer at least one telecommunications device for deaf persons (TDD) or equally effective telecommunications device.

(ii) The Agency shall ensure that all Agency letterhead, forms, and other documents listing any Agency telephone number list the appropriate TDD numbers.

(2) Interpreter service. (i) The Agency shall establish a reliable system for the provision of qualified interpreters to individuals with disabilities for Agency programs or activities. This provision does not require the Agency to have an interpreter on staff, but does require the Agency to be able to provide a qualified interpreter on reasonable notice.

(ii) Notice of the availability of interpreter service shall be included in all announcements notifying the public of Agency activities to which the public is invited or which it is permitted to attend, including but not limited to the Commission's meetings, consultations, hearings, press conferences, and State Advisory Committee conferences and meetings. This notice shall designate the Agency official(s) and the address, telephone and TDD number to call to request interpreter services.

(d) Specific requirements for printed communications. (1) The Agency shall establish a system to provide to individuals with disabilities appropriate reader or taping service for all Agency publications that are available to the public. This provision does not require the Agency to have a reader or taper on staff, but does require the Agency to be able to provide appropriate reader or taping service within a reasonable time and on reasonable notice. The Agency shall effectively notify qualified individuals with disabilities of the availability of reader or taping services.

(2) Notice of the availability of reader or taping service shall be included in all publications that are available to the public. This notice shall designate the Agency official(s) and the address, telephone, and TDD number to call to request interpreter services.

(e) Nothing in this section or § 707.10 requires the Agency to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a program or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens. In those circumstances where Agency personnel believe that the proposed action would fundamentally alter the program or activity or would result in undue financial and administrative burdens, the Agency has the burden of proving that

compliance with this section or § 707.10 would result in such alteration or burdens. The decision that compliance would result in such alteration or burdens must be made by the Staff Director or his or her designee after considering all Agency resources available for use in the funding and operation of the conducted program or activity and must be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion. If an action required to comply with this paragraph would result in such an alteration or such burdens, the Agency shall take any other action that would not result in such an alteration or such burdens but would nevertheless ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, individuals with disabilities receive the benefits and services of the program or activity.