

Incarcerated People with Disabilities: **Know Your Rights**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) and the Rehabilitation Act prohibit jails and prisons from discriminating against incarcerated people, and their family or friends, on the basis of disability.

Under the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act, jails and prisons must provide **reasonable accommodations** for incarcerated people with disabilities, to ensure they have **equal access to programs, services, and benefits**.

Equal access means that a person with a disability is given the opportunity to access the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability. The person with a disability must be able to obtain the information as fully, equally and independently as a person without a disability.

Reasonable accommodations means making existing facilities readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities and introducing or modifying equipment, policies, and procedures according to the disability of the person. Reasonable accommodations may include physical changes to the environment, accessible technologies, accessible communications, and policy enhancements.

Some examples of **auxiliary aids and services** that can be requested as a reasonable accommodation while in jail or prison include:

- Sign language and deaf language interpreters (the interpreter must be qualified. Knowing some sign language, or even being fluent in sign language, is not sufficient)
- Videophone, captioned telephones, captioned videos and TV, vibrating watches or armband alarms (all technology must be in good working order).
- Braille documents, screen readers or large print documents.
- Explanations of documents in plain language.
- Wheelchairs, canes, walkers.
- Back braces or lower bunks.
- And more!