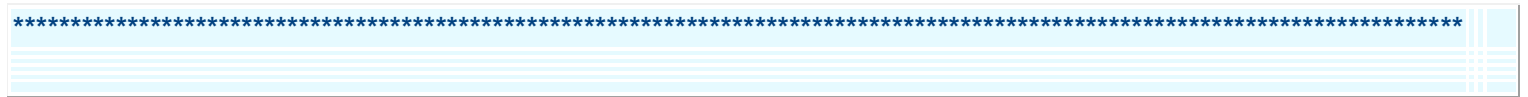


Department of Social and Health Services
Community Services Division
EA-Z Manual

Revision: # 1099
Category: **Equal Access**
Issued: June 1, 2020
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Summary

Revised and updated the entirety of this page for accuracy. Included references to the ACES Manual and CSD Procedures Handbook as appropriate.



~~Created on:-~~

~~Oct 23 2014~~

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Purpose:

~~To provide staff with basic information to Social Service Specialists about Community Service Office responsibilities in the identification of individuals needing extra help (an accommodation) to access or maintain services resulting from a disability or learning or literacy issue.~~

~~The department is required by Title 2 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all services, programs, and activities provided by the department.~~

Chapter 388-472 WAC broadly supports Title 2 of the ADA and outlines the following:

- WAC 388-472-0005 What are my rights and responsibilities?
- WAC 388-472-0010 What are necessary supplemental accommodation (NSA) services?
- WAC 388-472-0020 How does the department decide if I am eligible for NSA services?
- WAC 388-472-0030 How can I get NSA services?
- WAC 388-472-0040 What are the department's responsibilities in giving NSA services to me?
- WAC 388-472-0050 What if I don't accept or follow through with program requirements because I'm not able to or don't understand them?

~~to provide full access to services. These accommodations must be provided on an on-going basis to ensure that the client is able to maintain eligibility and fully access program services.~~

~~WAC 388-472-0040 How does the department decide if I am eligible for Necessary Supplemental Accommodation (NSA) services?~~

Clarifying Information

WAC 388-472-0010 What are NSA services?

1. We use the term Equal Access (EA) services instead of Necessary Supplemental Accommodation (NSA) services.
2. We can provide EA services if you have an impairment(s) or other problems that make it difficult to access our programs. EA services include:
 - a. Arranging for assistive listening devices, sign language interpretation, or other communication aids;
 - b. Sending forms and letters in large print or other format;
 - c. Arranging for or providing help to complete and submit forms to us;
 - d. Reading or explaining letters or forms we send;
 - e. Helping you give or get the information we need to decide or continue eligibility;
 - f. If we know you have a person who helps you with your applications, notifying them when we need information or when we are about to reduce or end your benefits;
 - g. Calling you instead of having you come into the office;
 - h. Meeting with you in a room free of distractions (when possible);
 - i. Reminding you of appointments;
 - j. If you miss an appointment or deadline, contacting you about the reason before we reduce or end your benefits;

- k. Reviewing our decision to stop, suspend, or reduce your benefits to make sure we followed your EA Plan;
 - l. Explaining to you a reduction or termination of your benefits (see WAC 388-418-0020);
 - m. Helping you request continuing benefits or a fair hearing;
 - n. Allowing someone you choose to be in charge of your benefits, and providing protective payments if needed.
- 3. For EA clients who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), follow policy guidance under Chapter 388-271 WAC, and in the EA-Z Manual.
- 4. For EA clients who have an Authorized Representative or Protective Payee, follow policy guidance under Chapter 388-460 WAC, and in the EA-Z Manual and Social Services Manual.
 - a. Authorized Representative- Food Assistance
 - b. Authorized Representative- Food, Cash, and Medical Benefit Issuances
 - c. Payees on Benefit Issuances- Overview
 - d. Payees on Benefits Issuances- Protective Payees
 - e. Protective Payees- Guidelines

WAC 388-472-0020 How does the department decide if I am eligible for NSA services?

- 1. All CSD clients who are head of household are potentially eligible for EA services.
- 2. If two parents are part of a TANF assistance unit, both clients are potentially eligible for EA services.
- 3. Public Benefit Specialists and WorkFirst Program Specialists are responsible for completing an EA Screening at application and eligibility review for all CSD clients.
 - a. Guidance on completing an EA Screening can be found in the CSD Procedures Handbook.
- 4. Public Benefit Specialists, WorkFirst Program Specialists, and Social Services staff are responsible for completing an additional EA Screening during a client contact when:
 - a. A client doesn't have an existing plan and may need one; or
 - b. An existing plan may require modification to better accommodate the client.

WAC 388-472-0030 How can I get NSA services?

- 1. Public Benefit Specialists, WorkFirst Program Specialists, and Social Services staff are responsible for developing an EA Plan when they identify a client as EA.
 - a. Steps on how to create an EA Plan can be found in the ACES Manual.
- 2. Public Benefit Specialists, WorkFirst Program Specialists, and Social Services staff are responsible for modifying an existing EA Plan when they or the client determines a need to do so.
 - a. Staff may not remove existing accommodations from a plan without the client's consent.
 - b. Steps on how to access and update an EA Plan can be found in the ACES Manual.

Worker Responsibilities—WAC 388-472-0040 What are the department’s responsibilities in giving NSA services to me?

1. When department staff work with clients identified as needing NSA, it is critical that the plan be readily available and used to ensure the client is able to fully access services and maintain eligibility. All CSD staff are continually responsible to review and follow a client’s EA Plan, and document that they have done so.
2. We restore lost benefits for EA clients when:
 - a. We stop a benefit because we are unable to tell if the client continues to qualify; **and**
 - b. The client provides proof they still qualify within twenty days after the benefit end date.

WAC 388-472-0050 What if I don’t accept or follow through with program requirements because I’m not able to or don’t understand them?

1. When staff decide an EA client’s limitation and/or impairment(s) is the cause for their refusal to accept or failure to follow through on the requirements listed below, the client has good cause and staff will not take any adverse action.

()Public Benefit Specialists or WorkFirst staff determine good cause for the following requirements. Refer to Basic Food Work Requirements- Good Cause for more information.

- a. Maintain employment (e.g. work registrants); **or**
- b. Participate in food assistance employment or training (e.g. ABAWD clients).

WorkFirst or Social Services staff determine good cause for the following requirements:

- a. Follow through with medical treatment;
- b. Follow through with referrals to other agencies; **or**
- c. Participate in the WorkFirst program.

2. When staff determines that a client has good cause, they review the client’s EA Plan to ensure that all EA accommodations necessary to support the client’s participation are included in their plan.
3. If the Department is unable to accommodate a client’s limitation or impairment to support a specific program requirement, the Department waives that program requirement.
 - a. Department staff review the case with their direct supervisor to explore if an alternative accommodation can be provided. If an alternative accommodation isn’t possible, staff submit an Exception to Rule request to see if the requirement can be waived.

NOTE:

Most accommodations are easily provided when the need for accommodation is understood. Other service providers, such as DVR may be able to assist in providing accommodations when the client is eligible for DVR services. In some cases, DVR may have adaptive devices that can be shared, such as access to a TTY for communication with persons with hearing impairments.

- 1.—Continually be alert to cues that might indicate a client is in need of Equal Access (EA) services.
- 2.—Conduct an EA and develop an EA Plan if one has not been done.
- 3.—Provide accommodations whenever appropriate.

EXAMPLE:

If you know that a particular client needs assistance, it is your ethical and legal responsibility to inform reception staff that the client is identified as EA and what accommodations are necessary, as stipulated in the EA Plan.

Screening

- Upon application, all DSHS applicants and recipients are assessed for their need for accommodations.
- Clients are screened using the ACES On-Line EA Screens to determine the need for accommodations and the plan for delivery of services.
- Most EA screenings and plan development will be done by reception, financial or WorkFirst Program Specialists.
- Social Service Specialists will be called upon for their expertise in screening and plan development when necessary.

Equal Access (EA) Accommodation Plan

Some EA Plans such as interpreter services or assistance with applications can be easily met. However, if the Financial Services Specialists or other staff need assistance in developing the EA Plan, it is important that the CSO Social Service Specialist is consulted. The CSO Social Service Specialist has primary responsibility for developing EA Plans when other staff are unable to accomplish this task due to the special needs of the client.

ACES Procedures

Equal Access and Accommodation Resources:

ACES letters in large print, Braille, other languages, etc. are located on the ACES-ADDR screen

Telecommunications Access Service (TAS)–DSHS

- [Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#)
- [Disability Issues and Employment Resources](#)
- [Disability Resources in Rural Communities](#)

Search IESA Clarification Database [Links](#)

[Title 2 of the American Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)

[28 CFR Part 35- Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in State and Local Government](#)

[Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#)

[Washington State Department of Services for the Blind](#)

[Disability Issues and Employment Resources](#)

[Disability Resources in Rural Communities](#)