

**FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**  
**POLICY ON ACCESS FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

**I. Introduction**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a federal civil rights statute for individuals with disabilities, requires all state and local government entities, including the courts, to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities to ensure equal access to court activities, programs and services. The Fifteenth Judicial Circuit of Illinois (Circuit Court) has adopted the following policy and procedures to ensure reasonable accommodations and services to persons with special needs who wish to participate in Circuit Court programs.

**II. Policy**

It is the policy of the Circuit Court to ensure that communications with and accommodations for individuals with special needs and without special needs are equally effective, consistent with the requirements of Title II of the ADA. Whenever necessary, and when proper advance notice is provided, the Circuit Court will provide, free of charge, the appropriate services to ensure that individuals with special needs have an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from any Circuit Court program. This policy applies to all members of the public who seek to participate in the Circuit Court's programs.

**III. Services and Accommodations**

There is a wide range of services and accommodations that promote effective building access and communication with persons with special needs. The Circuit Court may also provide any other reasonable accommodation necessary to permit a person with special needs to fully and equally participate in or to observe Circuit Court programs.

**IV. Notice that Accommodations are Available**

The Court Disability Coordinator (CDC) shall provide notice that appropriate accommodations are available to ensure that individuals with special needs have an equal opportunity to participate in Circuit Court programs by posting notices containing the information on the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit website. A list of the Circuit Court Disability Coordinators is available at the 15<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit website: [www.15thjudicialcircuit.com](http://www.15thjudicialcircuit.com)

**V. Request for Accommodations**

The CDC shall provide a request form to individuals who wish to request services or accommodations for persons with special needs. The request form is available on the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit website.

Whenever possible, a request for accommodation or service shall be made fourteen (14) days in advance of the proceeding. The request shall be as specific as possible and include a description of the accommodation sought and the date and location the accommodation is needed. The request shall be submitted to the Court Disability Coordinator. The CDC shall respond in writing within seven (7) days from the date the request was received.

The CDC will give “primary consideration” to the request of individuals with special needs. “Primary consideration” means that the Circuit Court will honor the choice of the individual, unless it demonstrates that another equally effective accommodation is available, or that the requested accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration of Circuit Court activities or undue financial and administrative burdens.

## VI. Grievance Procedure

Individuals have the right to file a grievance when they believe the Circuit Court and its employees have not complied with the provisions of this policy or the request for accommodations procedure. The grievance shall be filed within seven (7) days after the person filing the complaint becomes aware of the action or inaction. A complaint shall be in writing, using the Circuit Court’s grievance form, found on the Fifteenth Judicial Court website. The grievance shall contain the name and address of the person filing the complaint, and briefly describe the alleged violation. The complaint may be mailed or e-mailed to the attention of the CDC.

Within seven (7) days after receipt of a grievance, the CDC, or a designee may meet with the grievant, in person or phone, to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions, if the CDC or designee determines that such a meeting would be helpful to a determination. Within seven (7) days after the meeting, or within fourteen (14) days after receipt of the complaint if there is not a meeting, the CDC shall respond in writing.

If the response by the CDC does not resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the grievant, the grievant may within seven (7) days of the date of the CDC's written response, appeal the decision to the Chief Judge of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, c/o Court Disability Coordinator, at the mail or e-mail address provided on notice. Any appeal shall be in writing. Within fourteen (14) days after receipt of the appeal, the Chief Judge will respond in writing to the grievant with a final resolution of the grievance or complaint.

**FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
NOTICE OF ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY**

If you need an accommodation for a special need, assistance may be arranged.  
Please contact a Court Disability Coordinator at the address or number below.

**COURT DISABILITY COORDINATORS**

**CARROLL, JO DAVIESS, LEE, OGLE, STEPHENSON COUNTIES**

Le Ann Brandenburg  
Court Administrator  
Ogle County Judicial Center  
Oregon, IL 61061  
815-732-1197

Tom Schwamberger  
Assistant Court Administrator  
Ogle County Judicial Center  
Oregon, IL 61061  
815-732-1197

**15<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

**Request for Accommodation under the American with Disabilities Act**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person requesting accommodation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of accommodation requested (Please be specific):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date accommodation is needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Location where accommodation is needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send a copy of the completed form by mail or email to:

**Court Disability Coordinator  
Office of the Chief Judge  
106 S. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Ste. 306A  
[15thTCA@oglecounty.org](mailto:15thTCA@oglecounty.org)**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

Accommodation: \_\_\_\_\_

Granted: \_\_\_\_\_ Denied: \_\_\_\_\_

Notified on: \_\_\_\_\_

**FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF ILLINOIS**

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT – GRIEVANCE FORM**

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Grievant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Daytime Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **e-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Accommodation Requested:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Description of the alleged violation (please be specific):**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Please send a copy of this completed form to:**

**Office of the Chief Judge  
106 S 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 306A  
Oregon, IL 61061**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_