

## Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

### **CIVIL RIGHTS OF CLIENTS**

The Center endeavors to uphold and promote the dignity of all. To achieve this, the Center *does not* discriminate on the basis of:

|                   |                               |                          |                               |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| sex               | age                           | race or ethnicity        | religion                      |
| national origin   | ancestry                      | disability               | parenthood/pregnancy          |
| political beliefs | marital status (or change of) | physical characteristics | veteran status                |
| HIV/AIDS status   | financial condition           | sexual preference        | past personal substance abuse |

The Center **will not** deny a client any services available in our programs nor treat a client differently from others when determining whether she or he meets eligibility/other requirements. Consideration will be given to the well-being and safety of each individual client at all times. The Center **will not** discriminate against clients on the grounds of any of the above-mentioned conditions service provision or opportunities for participation in a specific program of instruction.

### **CLIENT BILL OF RIGHTS**

Clients of the Center have the right to:

1. receive services provided in a manner that enhances feelings of self-worth;
2. security and safety while attending classes and/or participating in Center activities;
3. discuss with Center staff the process and results of assessments and training as well as participate in formulating recommendations for devices and further instruction;
4. confidentiality and privacy of records which may include identification of and progress in achieving goals through assessment and training as well as issues encountered in achieving them *unless* a disclosure is authorized by laws and regulations governing right to privacy;
5. make comments on or suggestions for improvement of services within the scope of the Center to change without concern for interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal; and
6. seek remedy for and/or register complaints by following the steps outlined in the "Client Conflict Resolution Procedure" as well as have every effort made to resolve those complaints at the time of occurrence and with the appropriate person(s).

### **GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

*To learn and apply behaviors, skills, and attitudes helpful in achieving greater independence, the Responsibilities of Clients include:*

1. being honest and forthright when discussing issues and progress with staff, especially if instruction is not meeting expectations;
2. making a conscientious effort to learn and apply a program of increasing independence; and
3. attending classes, meetings, and other training-related activities as scheduled and cooperating with staff to assure receipt of receive high quality, useful services.

**Responsibilities of the Center** *include:*

1. assisting clients to continually identify goals as part of an overall program of increasing growth and skill development;
2. offering ways in which clients may develop and practice new and/or challenging skills to promote learning; and
3. recommending and arranging for referrals to other service providers, as appropriate, to better meet individual needs.

### **SUMMARY OF ASSISTANCE**

ACBVI Client Conflict Resolution Procedure: Current and former clients of the Center have the right to be treated in a manner that is respectful and dignified. In support of this, the Center

has a “Client Conflict Resolution Procedure” to be initiated when clients believe their civil rights have been violated or they have been treated in an unprofessional manner by a Center employee. When followed, the steps are designed to resolve conflicts harmoniously while involving the fewest number of people possible. The Executive Director will appoint a staff member to assist in completing the steps in this Procedure. “Client Complaint Procedure” forms are available from the Program Manager.

**Client Assistance Program (CAP):** Instituted by the federal government to protect the rights of clients with disabilities in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, this program provides an ombudsman who can: offer information about available programs funded under the Act as well as client rights and responsibilities in working with those programs; answer general questions about the services and policies of those programs; and mediate/advocate for clients when an agency’s services do not seem satisfactory. All CAP services are free and can be used at any time. The Disability Law Center of Alaska operates the Program: Anchorage - 565-1002; Fairbanks - 456-1070; Juneau - 586-1627; and statewide - 800-478-1234

**State of Alaska Grievance Procedure:** Those who believe they have been subjected to discrimination by a state agency on the basis of a disability may file a complaint by contacting the ADA Coordinator of the Department/Division in which the discriminatory practice or action occurred. All employment discrimination complaints will be referred to the State Office of Equal Employment Opportunity in the Department of Administration if no resolution has been achieved on an agency level. A person is under no obligation to use the State Complaint Procedure before filing a formal complaint with the State Commission on Human Rights, the Department of Justice or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

**U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Title II Complaint:** Title II prohibits discrimination based on disability in all programs, activities, and services of State and local governments. Those who feel they have been discriminated have the right to file a formal complaint by sending a letter to the DOJ that includes: full name, address, and telephone number of the complainant as well as the name of the party allegedly discriminated against; name of the agency, organization or institution that is believed to have discriminated; a description of the act(s) of discrimination, the date(s) of that/those act(s), and the name(s) of the alleged discriminators; and other information thought to be necessary to support the complaint.

**Disability Law Center:** This non-profit agency is staffed by legally trained personnel to advocate for/litigate on behalf of clients in situations arising directly from/due to their disability. State and federal laws and regulations governing non-discrimination of people with disabilities are upheld, mediated, and/or resolved. The Disability Law Center of Alaska operates the Client Assistance Program.