

# THE ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENT



- a review of laws, programs, and issues  
affecting the disabled community -

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Vol. 1, Issue, 1, Nov. 15, 1977. Published by the Supportive Services Program, Office of Handicapped Students Services, University of Minnesota, Duluth Campus.

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## SPECTRUM

"The Accessible Environment" is being published by the Supportive Services Office of the Handicapped Students' Services Program at UMD. However, we want this newsletter to reach a much broader spectrum that just handicapped students. It is our aim to review the laws, programs, and issues affecting the disabled community. If you have an interest in the rights and opportunities for the disabled, both on campus and within the community, and wish to be informed about such matters, then this newsletter is for you also.

Hopefully, a channel of communication can be opened between you and the UMD Office of the Handicapped Students' Services Program. We want to know what your needs and interests are. With that knowledge, we'll try our best to act on them and keep you informed on what can and is being done.

Now you can help us by passing this newsletter along to a disabled person or to someone else who you think might be interested. In addition, please fill out the feedback form on the last page of this newsletter and return it to L134, c/o Kristi Michaelson. Let us hear from you!

## THE BARE FACTS

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 became effective on June 3, 1977. At last, the handicapped people of America have a legal right to demand access to all federally funded programs. The legislation's aim is to end discrimination against handicapped people in the areas of employment, accessibility, health, welfare, social services, and education.

The law states that NO OTHERWISE QUALIFIED HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUAL SHALL SOLELY BY REASON OF HIS HANDICAP BE EXCLUDED FROM THE PARTICIPATION IN, BE DENIED THE BENEFITS OF, OR BE SUBJECT TO DISCRIMINATION UNDER ANY PROGRAM OR ACTIVITY RECEIVING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. Agencies which provide services, such as colleges and universities, and are receiving money from HEW can't deny services to a handicapped person because of inaccessible facilities or programs. Also, the hiring practices of an employer receiving federal money may not discriminate against the qualified handicapped person.

For the handicapped person at UMD or at any other post-secondary educational institution, here is a summary of your rights as protected under Section 504. NO QUALIFIED HANDICAPPED STUDENTS SHALL, ON THE BASIS OF HANDICAP, BE EXCLUDED FROM ANY ACADEMIC RESEARCH, (Continued on page 2, column 1)

(The Bare Facts)

ANY COURSE OF STUDY, OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING, HOUSING, HEALTH INSURANCE, COUNSELING, FINANCIAL AID, PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM, ATHLETICS, RECREATION, TRANSPORTATION SERVICE, OR OTHER EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.

These are the basic requirements that a post-secondary educational institution must follow in order to fulfill the law:

1. Preadmission inquiries about whether a person is handicapped are prohibited, unless it is clearly stated that such information is intended "solely in connection with its remedial action obligations" or for voluntary action efforts;
2. To insure that their requirements don't discriminate against a student on the basis of his handicap, the school is obligated to make modifications in its academic requirements;
3. All benefits and services of its programs must be readily accessible;
4. Convenient, accessible housing must be provided to handicapped students, and it must be comparable to the housing provided to non-handicapped at the same cost.

Compliance with Section 504 is required within sixty days of June 3, 1977, except where major architectural modifications are necessary. In such cases, those changes must be begun immediately and are to be completed within three years.

The term "handicapped individual" is defined in Section 504 as:

1. ANY PERSON WHO HAS A PHYSICAL OR MENTAL IMPAIRMENT WHICH SUBSTANTIALLY LIMITS ONE OR MORE OF HIS MAJOR LIFE ACTIVITIES. The functions of caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working are considered as major life functions;

2. Or - ANY PERSON WHO HAS A HISTORY OF PHYSICAL OR MENTAL IMPAIRMENT OR HAS BEEN MISCLASSIFIED AS HAVING SUCH AN IMPAIRMENT;
3. Or - ANY PERSON WHO IS REGARDED AS HAVING SUCH AN IMPAIRMENT. "Physical or mental impairment" means (A) ANY PHYSIOLOGICAL DISORDER OR CONDITION, COSMETIC DISFIGUREMENT, OR ANATOMICAL LOSS AFFECTING ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING BODY SYSTEMS: NEUROLOGICAL; MUSCULOSKELETAL; SPECIAL SENSE ORGANS; RESPIRATORY, INCLUDING SPEECH ORGANS; CARDIOVASCULAR; REPRODUCTIVE; DIGESTIVE; GENITOURINARY; HEMIC AND LYMPHATIC; SKIN; AND ENDOCRINE; or (B) ANY MENTAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDER, SUCH AS MENTAL RETARDATION, ORGANIC BRAIN SYNDROME, EMOTIONAL OR MENTAL ILLNESS, AND SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES. The drug addict and the alcoholic are also included under the definition of the "handicapped individual."

Section 504 prohibits the following discriminatory practices by an agency or institution receiving federal money:

1. Denying a qualified handicapped person the opportunity to participate in a benefit or service;
2. Providing a benefit or service to a handicapped person that is not equal to or as effective as that provided a non-handicapped person;
3. Providing separate but equal benefits or service unless a separate service must be provided for a handicapped person in order to be effective;
4. Assist an agency or organization that discriminates on the basis of a handicap;
5. Limiting a qualified handicapped person in any way from enjoying any right, privilege, advantage, or opportunity that is enjoyed by others receiving an aid, benefit, or service.

This article has summarized the rights of the handicapped individual as set forth in Section 504. This law "represents the first Federal civil rights law protecting the rights of handicapped persons and reflects a national commitment to end discrimination on the basis of a handicap."

## LIBRARY

Duluth is getting a new library, but so is UMD!

In Library 120, just past the Second Edition Bookstore, there will soon be a resource library containing current issues of consumer advocacy publications of interest to disabled individuals, such as Accent on Living, Achievement, The Chronicle and Performance, in addition to newsletters from other colleges. These will be available to anyone interested in them. We have set no definite business hours as yet, but come on in and say "Hi!" Let us know what's on your mind and how we can help make UMD a more comfortable place!

## MODIFICATIONS ON CAMPUS

UMD is continuing its efforts to make the campus increasingly accessible to the disabled student, both in its new buildings and modifications in the old.

Between twenty and twenty-five of the restrooms scattered throughout the academic buildings are in the process of being modified. Mirrors and towel racks are being lowered, and individual stalls are being widened in order to be accessible from a wheelchair.

The new Health Science Library is nearing completion and is being built to be accessible to the handicapped. As you enter from the north parking lots, there is a regulation grade ramp to the entrance. Once inside, there is a public elevator which can be taken to the first floor concourse level.

The restroom modifications and the new, accessible Health Science Library are welcomed additions on the UMD Campus.

## PARKING

The State of Minnesota, in accordance with federal law #504 (see article, p. 1), offers special license plates for handicapped drivers.

Anyone who has had an amputation of one or both legs or has lost the use of one or both legs through injury to the spinal cord, stroke, cerebral palsy, etc. can qualify for the plates. Also, an orthopedic specialist in West Germany has developed a car using foot pedals to stop, start, and steer a car, opening the possibility of driving to those who have lost control of/or lost their arms. Thus, they too may soon qualify for the plates.

To get the plates, contact the Deputy Registrar in the county of your permanent residence and ask for the Handicapped Plate Application. If the handicap is indicated on a current driver's license or a document in the Department of Public Safety, just fill out the application, have it notarized, and the Deputy Registrar will send the application to St. Paul, where the plates are issued. If, however, there is not any record of a handicap at the Department of Public Safety, a record from your doctor must be submitted to the Department of Public Safety. For help on-campus, go to Administration 102 and talk to Jim Shearer.

Advantages of these plates include a savings of \$12.00 and the use of parking spaces reserved for the handicapped, which bear the universal wheelchair symbol.

For further information, write or call:  
Department of Public Safety  
Transportation Building  
John Ireland Boulevard  
St. Paul, Mn. 55155  
Phone: (612) 296-6652

## WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

I am a disabled student here at UMD who is confined to a wheelchair. I was wondering, what am I supposed to do if I am not on the ground floor of a building at school when there's a fire? Since the elevators can't be used in such emergencies, how am I supposed to get out of the building?

Concerned

Dear Concerned,

This is a very vital issue to all disabled students. Perhaps some sort of evacuation teams could be formed and trained. Also, each department should be informed of the proper action to take in case of an emergency. For more information, contact UMD's safety coordinator John Koval in 242 Administration, Plant Services.

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When is the Arena Auditorium going to make better accommodations for seating of people in wheelchairs? In the Auditorium, I can only get a seat way towards the back where I can't see very well. I'd like to be able to sit closer to the stage and have a good seat.

- A Deprived Fan -

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I'm really getting bugged at all of the able-bodied people who park in designated handicapped parking spots. Don't they know what those big signs with the handicapped symbol on them are for? I wish someone (especially a policeman) would tell them there's a ten dollar fine for parking there without the proper authorization. Meanwhile, I'm

- Stuck in the Parking Lot -

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The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

"The Accessible Environment" is compiled and edited by Laura Lakemacher and Kristi Michaelson.

In order to better understand the needs, interests, and concerns of the UMD community, we are asking you to please complete this form and return it to Library 134, UMD.

Please check the appropriate boxes:

- I would be interested in being on the mailing list of this newsletter.
- I have some information, articles, etc. that I would like to submit to this newsletter.
- I'm interested in knowing more about the laws and regulations that address themselves to the needs of disabled people.
- I would be interested in a project for surveying and rating the accessibility of buildings in Duluth.
  - I would be interested in participating in this project.
- I have encountered some specific problems which I think should be examined. Please describe briefly:

Questions I would like to see responded to in the "Question and Answer" column.

Additional comments concerning this newsletter or this general area:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: UMD Supportive Services  
Office of Handicapped Student's Services  
L134  
Duluth, MN 55812