

Penn State **Extension**

February 2012

Program Accessibility Guidelines for Persons with Disabilities in 4-H Horse Programs or Activities

Educators and volunteers should consider several factors and work together to appropriately include persons with disabilities in the Pennsylvania 4-H Horse Program. This fact sheet will provide guidelines for determining the possibility of reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities in 4-H horse programs, events and activities.

Reasonable Accommodations are: Any modifications in 4-H programs that enable qualified participants with disabilities to demonstrate their skills.

Scope of Reasonable Accommodation:

- Modification to the enrollment/entry/application process (e.g. alternate formats of forms if requested)
- Modification to 4-H evaluation requirements or the manner under which the evaluation is customarily performed
- Modification that enables a participant with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of the 4-H programs

The term "reasonable" means plausible or feasible in this context. The accommodation must be both reasonable for the 4-H Program to implement and effective for the participant.

- 1. The current accommodation statement must be used on all announcements for 4-H horse activities or events. To access current statement go to the College of Agricultural Sciences website: <http://agsci.psu.edu/> faculty and staff resources *or* <http://agsci.psu.edu/communications/resources/statements>**

Penn State encourages persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions about the physical access provided, please contact _____ in advance of your participation or visit (*list name and phone number of county extension educator.*) Requests for accommodation should be made to the extension educator at least three weeks in advance of the event.

The current affirmative action statements and other university/college statements should be included as appropriate. Current statements are available on the College of Agricultural Sciences website as noted above.

- 2. Extension educators should use the following example when exploring possible reasonable accommodations for participants with disabilities:**

Situation:

A person registers for one of the divisions for a horse show OR requests to participate in classes other than those included in current rules for the Therapeutic Riding Division. You become aware that the person has a disability by one of the following ways: the person tells you that she/he has a disability; the person has a visible disability, you become aware that the person has a disability by information that has been provided on the medical release forms, entry forms or Therapeutic Riding Division (TRD) forms.

The extension educator should then do the following:

- ✓ Ask the person to tell you if she/he has any functional limitations as a result of the disability. Examples of functional limitations might be blindness, inability to walk, inability to use hands, inability to stand for long periods of time, inability to hear, etc. Once you obtain this information then...

- ✓ Ask the person if the functional limitations would interfere with or prevent participation in the program. If the answer is no, then the usual registration process would continue. If the answer is yes then...
- ✓ Ask the person if there are any accommodations that could be considered which would enable the individual to participate. Examples of possible accommodations are modifications to rules and policies, elimination of architectural barriers, providing interpreters, modifying equipment, etc. After you obtain this information then...
- ✓ Determine if any of the suggested accommodations are reasonable. If you have any questions if the accommodations are reasonable or if accessibility should be provided, contact the Equine Extension Specialist (Youth, Pat Comerford), the chair of PA 4-H Horse Program Development Committee, or 4-H Program Leader (Christy Bartley) to discuss. One of these people will then consult with the University's ADA Coordinator (in Affirmative Action Office at Penn State) to determine if any of the suggested accommodations are reasonable and if accessibility should be provided.

Accommodations are considered reasonable if they do not change the fundamental nature of the program or alter the essential criteria for participation. If the accommodations do not alter the fundamental nature of the program, then that reasonable accommodation will be provided.

For example, youth with disabilities participating in a driving class may modify the reins if needed but will still be expected to perform the requirements of the class. We are not required to alter the essential criteria of the class for persons with disabilities. Participants with disabilities will be judged by the same criteria as other participants in the class.

Functional limitations with or without reasonable accommodations that pose a "direct threat" to the exhibitor with a disability or to other exhibitors do not have to be made. If you feel that the suggested accommodations are not reasonable, OR if you feel that *even with* reasonable accommodations the health and safety of the individual or others are at stake, please discuss these concerns with the Affirmative Action Office at 814-863-0471.

If someone has a programmatic question, such as what might be an accommodation related to ADA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, contact the Affirmative Action Office at 814-863-0471.

If someone has a compliance question related to ADA or the Rehab Act, please contact the ADA Coordinator at 814-863-0471 v/tty. If coordinator is not available then please request to talk with another staff member in the Affirmative Action office, at the same number

3. The volunteer or educator should NOT make the final decision to refuse accommodation.

Allowing or refusing accommodation is done on a case-by-case basis.

If a volunteer or educator is considering refusing accommodation, the educator should contact the Equine Extension Specialist (Youth, Pat Comerford) at 814-863-3657 or by e-mail (pcomerford@psu.edu) and Affirmative Action Office at 814-863-0471 at least three weeks prior to the event (or as soon as possible if less than 3 weeks notice is provided).

In the event that Extension Horse Specialist is unavailable, the educator must contact the chairperson OR an extension educator member of the PA 4-H Horse Program Development Committee OR 4-H Program Leader (Christy Bartley) at cek4@psu.edu or 814-863-3828.

4. BEFORE contacting Extension Horse Specialist, the extension educator should obtain necessary information and complete the attached "Program Accessibility Checklist".

(Checklist on next pages)

Penn State **Extension**

4-H Horse Program Accessibility Checklist

This checklist should be used when exploring possibilities for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities in 4-H horse events or activities.

Please complete this checklist *before* contacting Extension Horse Specialist or Affirmative Action Office.

Please provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the disability of the 4-H member? (Describe disability.)

2. What are the functional limitations of the disability?

3. Do functional limitations limit or prevent participation of the 4-H member in the 4-H activity?

4. IF functional limitations limit or prevent the 4-H member's participation, are there any reasonable accommodations that will allow the 4-H member to participate?
 - a.) If yes, please describe the accommodations that are requested.
(Ask parent and leaders to suggest accommodations.)

 - b.) If NO or if you have questions, please contact Extension Horse Specialist (Youth) and Affirmative Action Office.

Key points to consider:

Do not have to alter fundamental nature of program or essential criteria for participation.

Participants with disabilities will be judged by same criteria as other participants.

Functional limitations with or without reasonable accommodations should not pose a direct threat to person with disability or others.

Direct threat = significant risk of substantial harm. Must be evidence that an actual threat exists; cannot be based on speculative or hypothetical threats.

Must consider whether direct threat can be eliminated or reduced below level of "direct threat" by "reasonable accommodation".

4-H Horse Program Accessibility Checklist

Criteria for determining direct threat, reasonable accommodation, and program accessibility are available from the Affirmative Action Office at Penn State (814-863-0471).

Current affirmative action, accommodation statements and other university and college statements must be used as appropriate on all announcements for 4-H horse events and other program materials as appropriate.

Current statements and guidelines for us are available on the College of Agricultural Sciences website: <http://agsci.psu.edu/> faculty and staff resources

Visit Penn State Extension on the web: **extension.psu.edu**

Additional information and resources for therapeutic horsemanship activities may be available from:

- Pennsylvania Council on Therapeutic Horsemanship (PACH) at www.pacth.org
- Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) .International at www.pathintl.org

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