INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING USPS AND A&P POSITION DESCRIPTIONS THAT COMPLY WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

WHAT IS THE ADA?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights statute that prohibits the discrimination of disabled citizens in employment, public services, transportation, public accommodations, and telecommunications. Employers must ensure equal opportunity in recruiting, testing, and hiring of qualified applicants with disabilities. Employers must provide reasonable accommodation for workers with disabilities. This may include:

- making facilities used by workers accessible and usable for workers with disabilities
- restructuring jobs or purchasing or modifying equipment or devices
- modifying examinations, training materials, or policies.

HOW DOES THE ADA AFFECT THE WAY POSITION DESCRIPTIONS ARE WRITTEN?

Position Descriptions should differentiate between "ESSENTIAL" job functions and those that are "MARGINAL". When determining whether or not a job function is essential, the first consideration is whether employees in the position actually are required to perform the function.

For Example: A job description for a Senior Clerk position (class code 0004) may state that typing is a function of the job. If the supervisor has never or seldom requires an employee to type, this could not be considered an essential function.

The next consideration is whether removing a function would fundamentally change the job.

For Example: A job description for a Word Processing Operator (class code 0090) may require the employee to produce and proofread documents. The ability to produce and to proofread accurately are essential functions, because these are the reasons that this position exists.

A third consideration is whether a function is highly specialized, and the person in the position is hired for special expertise or ability to perform it.

For Example: A job description for an Interpreter for Individuals with Hearing Impairments (class code 5753) may require an employee who can communicate fluently using Sign Language. Fluent communication using Sign Language is therefore an essential function of the job.

HOW DO YOU COMPLETE THE NEW USPS POSITION DESCRIPTION FORM?

1. Describe the job duties in terms of the purpose or results rather than the method used or how the job is presently performed. The job should be described, not the individual performing the job. The position description should be written in a concise and complete manner so that the employee has a clear understanding of the job duties and responsibilities. Include explanation of what work is done, responsibility for results, and consequence of actions or errors.

2. List essential functions beginning with the most important duty under 13a. on the form. Include percentage of time required to perform each duty in the column at the right of the form.
3. List marginal duties under 13b. Remember, marginal duties are functions that could be removed without fundamentally changing the job. It is possible to have positions where there are no marginal functions.

4. List machines and equipment used regularly on the job under item 15. Be prepared to consider and make reasonable accommodations should the need occur.

HOW DO YOU COMPLETE THE NEW A&P POSITION DESCRIPTION FORM?

1. List essential functions under items 13a. through 13f. using the same criteria used on USPS position descriptions for the following: Policy-making and/or Interpretation, Program Direction and Development, Supervision Exercised, Level of Public Contact, Monetary Responsibility, and Statement of Responsibility for Confidential Data.

2. List marginal functions under item 14. It is possible to have positions that do not have marginal functions.

KEY WORDS DEFINED IN THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT HANDBOOK

"Disability" - An individual is considered to have a disability if the individual has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.

"Reasonable Accommodations" - Any change in the work environment or in the way things are usually done that results in equal employment opportunity for an individual with a disability. An employer must make a reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified applicant or employee with a disability unless it can show that the accommodation would cause an undue hardship on the operation of its business.

"Qualified Individual With A Disability" - Person with a disability who satisfies the requisite skill, experience, education, and other job related requirements of the employment position such individual holds or desires, and who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the position.

"Undue Hardship" - An action that is excessively costly, extensive, substantial, or disruptive, or that would fundamentally alter the nature or operation of the business.

QUESTIONS REGARDING REQUIREMENTS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE ADA SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO KEVIN JONES AT EXT. 2609 OR SHARON JONES AT EXT. 2611