

Section 504 Plan Warren County, Pennsylvania

This Section 504 Plan is designed to ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided equal access to the benefits of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Section 504 prohibits discrimination based on disability in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, including CDBG-funded programs. The purpose of this plan is to outline how Warren County will ensure that all individuals, regardless of disability, have full access to programs, services, activities, and benefits funded by CDBG.

Goals and Objectives

The goals of the Section 504 Plan are:

1. Ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to housing, public facilities, and services funded by CDBG.
2. Ensure that no individual is discriminated against because of a disability in any of the Jurisdiction's CDBG programs or activities.
3. Ensure that reasonable accommodations are made to allow individuals with disabilities to fully participate in or benefit from CDBG-funded programs and activities.
4. Improve the accessibility of CDBG-funded housing projects, public infrastructure, and services to individuals with disabilities.

Compliance

Warren County will comply with Section 504 by ensuring the following:

1. Non-Discriminatory Policies and Procedures
 - Warren County will review and update all policies, procedures, and practices to ensure that they do not discriminate against individuals with disabilities.
 - Warren County will ensure that all CDBG-funded programs, services, and activities are accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities.
2. Accessibility Requirements for Housing and Facilities
 - Warren County will ensure that all CDBG-funded housing units are designed and built to meet the accessibility standards outlined in Section 504. This includes compliance with

accessibility requirements for new construction, renovations, and alterations to housing and public facilities.

- Accessible routes, entrances, parking and signage will be provided as necessary to allow individuals with disabilities to access CDBG-funded facilities and programs.

Reasonable Accommodations

- Warren County will provide reasonable accommodations in policies, practices, or procedures when necessary to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in or benefit from CDBG-funded programs and services. Examples of accommodations may include:
 - Modifications to housing policies for individuals with disabilities.
 - Provision of assistive technology or devices to facilitate access to services.
 - Providing materials in alternative formats (e.g., large print, Braille, or electronic formats).
 - Sign language interpreters, or other communication accommodations for individuals with hearing impairments.
 - Adjusting application deadlines or requirements for applicants with disabilities.

Effective Communication

- Warren County will provide effective communication for individuals with disabilities, including:
 - Providing auxiliary aids and services upon request, such as sign language interpreters, TTY (text telephone) services, or materials in alternative formats.
 - Ensuring that public meetings, hearings, and workshops are accessible to individuals with disabilities by providing reasonable accommodations such as interpreters or accessible materials.

Program Accessibility

- Warren County will ensure that all programs and activities funded through CDBG are accessible to individuals with disabilities. This includes modifying existing facilities or making use of alternate locations when needed to ensure that no individual is excluded from participating in or benefiting from a program or activity.

Public Notice and Outreach

Warren County will actively inform the public about the availability of reasonable accommodations and the procedures for requesting accommodations. Efforts will include:

1. Warren County will provide notice of the availability of reasonable accommodations in all public communications related to CDBG-funded programs. This may include posting signs, providing

information in program brochures, and updating websites to include contact information for requesting accommodations.

2. Warren County will establish and maintain a formal grievance procedure for individuals to file complaints if they believe they have been discriminated against based on disability. The grievance procedure will provide an opportunity for individuals to resolve issues related to accessibility or reasonable accommodations in a timely manner.
3. Warren County will publish an annual notice detailing the name and contact information for the Section 504 coordinator as well as the process of filing a grievance. That notice will comply with the county's Language Access Plan, including publication in Pennsylvania Dutch, where appropriate.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Jurisdiction will implement this Section 504 Plan through the following steps:

1. Responsibility for Implementation
 - Warren County will designate the CDBG program administrator as the Section 504 coordinator. That individual will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of this Section 504 Plan, ensuring that all CDBG-funded programs and services are compliant with Section 504 requirements.
 - The CDBG program administrator will monitor the accessibility of housing, services, and facilities and will review all policies and practices to ensure compliance with non-discrimination requirements.
2. Training and Awareness
 - Staff members responsible for administering CDBG-funded programs will receive training on the requirements of Section 504, including how to respond to accommodation requests and ensure accessibility in program design and implementation.
 - Contractors and subrecipients of CDBG funding will be informed of Section 504 requirements and will be required to comply with accessibility standards in their work.
3. Monitoring and Evaluation
 - Warren County will monitor the implementation of this plan to assess its effectiveness in providing equal access to CDBG-funded programs and services for individuals with disabilities.
 - Warren County will conduct periodic reviews of accessibility and reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities and will make adjustments to programs, policies or procedures as needed.

Grievance and Appeal Process

If an individual believes that they have been discriminated against or denied a reasonable accommodation under this plan, the Jurisdiction will provide the following grievance process:

1. Filing a Complaint

- Individuals can file a complaint with the designated Section 504 coordinator. Complaints should include the nature of the issue, the program or service involved, and any relevant documentation.

2. Investigation and Resolution

- Warren County will investigate all complaints within 30 days of receipt. The individual will be notified of the investigation outcome and any proposed corrective actions.

3. Appeal Process

- If the individual is dissatisfied with the resolution, they may appeal the decision to the Warren County Commissioners.