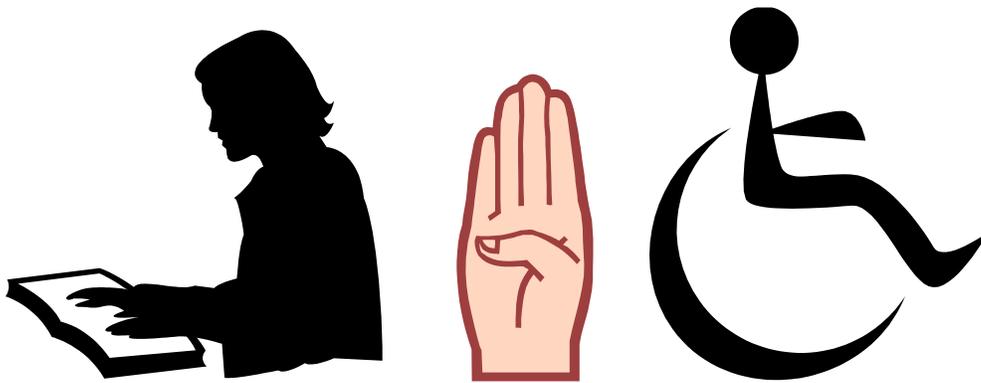


A Resource Manual for Students: Services for Students with Disabilities



LSUS

One University Place
Administration Building, Room 208
Shreveport, Louisiana 71115
(318) 797-5116

Revised 9/9/19

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THE ROLE OF SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

LSU Shreveport is committed to making students with disabilities full participants in its programs, services, and activities through its compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended (ADAAA) of 1990. Services are available to any student who establishes a functional limitation resulting from a learning, physical, sensory, or psychological impairment. The primary objective is to assist students with disabilities in meeting his/her academic goals. SSD provides intake, assessment of needs on campus, and facilitation of academic and other accommodations for students with disabilities. SSD advocates for all students and works as a liaison between students and faculty, as well as with community agencies in disability related issues. SSD informs the administration of policies and issues relevant to students with disabilities. SSD also provides information to faculty and staff so the LSUS community gains a greater understanding of the needs of students with disabilities and their responsibilities. Services do not include academic advising or treatment, such as mental health counseling or rehabilitation counseling.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rights and Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities

A student with a disability has the right to an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs offered at LSU Shreveport. To ensure this right, every student with disabilities at LSU Shreveport:

- has a responsibility to identify him or herself as needing accommodation in a timely fashion. When the disability is not obvious, the student must provide documentation. Any information provided is considered an educational record and is subject to the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA).
- has a responsibility to document how the disability affects a particular delivery system, instructional method, or evaluation criteria when requesting accommodation.
- has the responsibility to actively participate in the search for accommodations and auxiliary aids. This responsibility extends to working with the university to seek financial assistance from government agencies and private sources.
- has the same obligation as any student to meet and maintain the university's fundamental academic and technical standards.
- has the right to be evaluated on his/her ability, not disability. If the disability disproportionately affects the outcome of an evaluation method, the student is entitled to an evaluation by alternate means.
- is entitled to an equal opportunity to learn. If the location, delivery system, or instructional methodology limits access, participation, or ability to benefit, the student has a right to reasonable alterations in those aspects of the course (or program) to accommodate the disability.
- is entitled to an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the academic community at a comparable level as that provided to any student.

Rights and Responsibilities of LSU Shreveport

LSU Shreveport recognizes that its basic responsibility is to identify and maintain the academic and technical standards that are fundamental to providing quality academic programs while ensuring the rights of students with disabilities. To meet these obligations, LSU Shreveport:

- has the responsibility to inform its applicants and students about the availability and the range of accommodations.
- has the responsibility to evaluate applicants based solely on their abilities. If an evaluation method or the criteria have a disproportionately adverse effect on an applicant with a disability, LSU Shreveport will seek a reasonable alternative.
- has the responsibility to ensure that all of its programs are accessible.
- has the responsibility to make reasonable adjustments in the delivery, instructional method, and evaluation system for a course when these have a disproportionately adverse impact upon a disability.
- has the responsibility to adjust any requirement/course that has a disproportionately adverse impact on a disability and is not fundamental to the student's academic program.
- and its faculty have the right to identify and establish the abilities, skills, and knowledge that are fundamental to the academic programs/courses and to evaluate each student's performance on this basis. These fundamental programs/course goals are not subject to accommodation.
- has the right to request and review documentation that supports requests for accommodation. Based upon this review, LSU Shreveport has the right to refuse an unsupported request.
- and its faculty have a right to select among equally effective methods of accommodating a student with a disability.
- has the right to refuse an accommodation based on undue hardship.

DISABILITY LAWS IN POST SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

In 1973 the Rehabilitation Act was enacted, delineating the rights of individuals with disabilities to a fair and equal opportunity for education. It was Section 504 of this document which directly affected higher (i.e., postsecondary) educational institutions, in that it stated the following: **“No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States shall, solely on the basis of disability, be denied access to, or the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity provided by any institution receiving federal financial assistance.”**

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

In 1990, the ADA expanded on the rights of individuals with disabilities in all areas of public endeavor; Title II dealt with higher education and offered more comprehensive, detailed information on precisely what kinds of accommodation must be provided by a university and under what circumstances. Following a series of court cases that were seen as a narrowing the protections of individuals with disabilities, the ADA was amended in 2008. The policies and procedures outlined here are intended to comply with both the letter and spirit of these federal guidelines.

Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of educational records and to establish the right of students to inspect and review their educational records. Records maintained at SDCC for the purpose of coordinating services for students with disabilities, including any medical or clinical records, are considered educational records as defined by FERPA and **may** be disclosed to other school officials with a legitimate educational interest. For example, the provision of academic adjustments is not limited to SSD, but rather a coordinated effort between the student, faculty and staff. Therefore, in the course of providing services, it **may** become necessary for disability-related information to be shared with other university personnel properly involved in evaluating and responding to requests for accommodations (i.e. instructor, dean, chair). SSD will make every effort to limit disclosure of information to student's identity, learning preferences, functional limitations, and explanation of recommended accommodations.

Definition of a Disability

A person with a disability is someone with a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities. A person is considered to be a person with a disability if he/she has the disability, has a record of the disability, or is regarded as having the disability. Inherent in this definition is the concept that an impairment itself is not a disability. It is the interaction of the impact of an impairment and the demands of the environment that create a disability.

- A “physical impairment” means 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, genito-urinary, hemic and lymphatic, skill and endocrine.
- A “mental impairment” means any psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disorders.
- “Substantially limits” refers to an inability to perform a major life activity, or a significant restriction as to the condition, manner, or duration under which a major life activity can be performed, in comparison to the average person or to most people.
- Major life activities are the basic activities that the average person can perform with little or no difficulty. These activities include, but are not limited to, walking, seeing, learning, working, performing manual tasks, speaking, and hearing.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) was established at LSU Shreveport to ensure access to all university programs and services and to provide a campus-wide standard for accommodation provision. SSD is coordinated out of the Office of the Dean of Students and is located in the Administration Building, Room 208; (318) 797-5116.

General Policy

Identification as a student with a disability is always voluntary. However, only those students who identify themselves to the University and/or present appropriate written documentation of a disability are eligible for academic accommodation. Students with a disability which requires special accommodation on the part of the University are advised to submit documentation to the Dean of Students prior to the beginning of the term so that arrangements can be made to meet the individual needs. The students are further required to make contact with the Dean of Students office prior to the beginning of a new term so that appropriate accommodations may be continued and/or new accommodations arranged. Students who are found to be without substantial limitations in one or more major life activities are referred to other campus and community resources for assistance.

Some students decide not to self-identify and prefer to self-accommodate. In such cases, the student is responsible for his/her performance for as long as he/she self-accommodates. If a student chooses not to disclose a disability and/or request accommodation, the university does not assume responsibility for any disability-related problems that may arise. At any later time during their course of study a student can choose to disclose and the university will respond according to the following policies. However, students are not afforded retroactive accommodations.

Eligibility for Services

Services are available to any student whose disability limits a major life activity. Accessing accommodations requires several administrative steps. The first step is registration. During this process, students complete an application for services and an intake interview. The purpose of the interview is to gather information relevant to the student's functional limitations in the academic setting. Sufficient documentation of the disabling condition and related needs may also be requested. Exactly what is "sufficient documentation" depends on the disability and is elaborated upon below.

Documentation

Documentation should verify the disability, describe the resulting limitations of a major life activity and support requests for accommodation, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids. Sufficient documentation varies according to the specific disabling condition. However, general guidelines include: recency of documentation, appropriate clinical documentation to substantiate the condition, evidence to establish a rationale supporting the need for accommodation, and qualifications of the evaluator.

The provision of all reasonable accommodation and services is based upon the assessment of the impact of the student's disabilities on his or her academic performance. So that accommodations are most appropriate to the student's learning environment, documentation should be recent and validate the need for services based on the individual's current level of functioning in the educational setting. A school plan such as an individualized education program (IEP) or a 504 accommodation plan is not sufficient documentation on its own but may be included as part of a more comprehensive assessment battery.

Should initial documentation not be available, the Dean of Students or the university has the right to request disability related documentation from the appropriate licensed professional. Additional information may also be requested if initial documentation is either insufficient or incomplete. This information will be used to document a student's functional limitations in the educational setting and to determine reasonable accommodations. **The cost of the documentation is the responsibility of the**

student. Information regarding specific requirements for evaluation and documentation is provided below. The University reserves the right to deny accommodation pending receipt of the documentation.

Accommodations

Receiving accommodations should not be regarded as giving the student “special privileges,” but rather as minimizing the impact of the disability to the greatest extent possible. It is important to remember that the professor expects the same academic performance from all students regardless of disability. The ADA and Section 504 did not intend that universities compromise academic standards or pass students because of a disability.

Decisions regarding appropriate accommodations are based upon the particular facts of each case, including the student interview, documentation, and other information relevant to the disabling condition and academic requirements. These recommendations are written on a service contract and a letter(s) of verification. It is the responsibility of the student to deliver the letters of verification to the appropriate faculty/staff. The faculty/staff is responsible for carrying out accommodations.

Accommodations may include physical adaptations and classroom modifications. Physical adaptations include classroom arrangements, preferential seating, and accessible parking. Classroom modifications may occur in one or more of the following areas: environment, presentation, materials, requirements, and testing. Academic assistance is also available through general campus resources.

Course Substitution

Students who have disabilities which may prevent them from completing a required course may petition for a course substitution. Course substitution is not an appropriate modification if the course or content is found to be essential to the area of study and making a substitution would require “substantial change in an essential element of the curriculum.” It is the university’s responsibility to show that a certain class or area is essential to a certain course of study and if there were any changes in the curriculum, it would substantially alter the curriculum. This will be decided on a case by case basis. The student initiates the request through the Dean of Students.

The student should submit a written, personal statement which indicates his/her reasons for requesting a substitution. This statement should include an explanation of the disabling condition, the student’s experience in this course (or similar courses) and a description of any accommodations utilized as well as their effectiveness. The request must include or give permission for the release of relevant, comprehensive documentation which specifically explains the disability’s impact on the student’s ability to learn the materials of the course for which the student is requesting substitution.

The request will be forwarded to a committee consisting of the Chair or a representative from the student’s major, the Chair or a representative from the discipline in which a substitution is requested, and the Dean of Students. The chair of the committee will rotate among the academic deans and in all cases, the Committee Chair will be a dean unaffected by the request. The committee will consider the student’s written statement and supporting documentation as well as the specific course in question and its relationship to the program of instruction being pursued by the student or its direct relation to licensing requirements. Recommendations will be made on a case by case basis. The committee will make written recommendations to the student’s dean within two weeks of receipt of a request.

Committee decisions regarding substitutions may be appealed to the Provost by either the student or his/her dean.

Attendance

Students at LSUS, with or without disabilities, are expected to give their academic responsibilities first consideration and to attend class regularly and punctually. An absence, avoidable or unavoidable, does not relieve the student from responsibility for course requirements. Students with disabilities should be aware that class attendance policies are not determined by SSD; nor can these policies be waived by SSD. Because attendance may be integral to the academic goals of the class, these policies are set by faculty at the college, departmental or individual level. Therefore, attendance requirements may vary according to the department or course. In some cases, attendance is fundamental to course objectives; for example, students may be required to interact with others in the class, to demonstrate the ability to think and argue critically, or to participate in group projects. In other instances, faculty may determine that students can master course content despite some or many absences.

Similarly, faculty also determine policies regarding make-up work and missed quizzes and exams. Faculty are not required to lower or effect substantial modifications of standards for accommodation purposes. So that arrangements for absences can be made, students are encouraged to remain in close contact with instructors when classes have been missed.

LSUS realizes that students who have physical and/or psychological impairments may be prevented from attending class on a regular basis. Therefore, it is recommended that students with disabilities know the requirements of a class and fully consider the impact of their disability **prior** to registering. When a disabling condition significantly impacts a student's attendance, the student is advised to contact an academic advisor or the Dean of Students and consider the following options:

- **Dropping from the class** - courses may be dropped in accordance with the dates indicated on the Academic Calendar. During the first 15 days of class of a regular term, no record of the dropped course is maintained. During the next seven weeks, a W (withdrawal) is assigned for courses dropped. During the final five weeks, no withdrawal is permitted except as authorized by the student's dean.
- **Resignation from the university** - With the approval of a student's dean, a student may resign (drop from all classes) in accordance with the dates indicated on the Academic Calendar.
- **Incomplete (I) grade** - An "I" is granted for work which is of passing quality but, which because of circumstances beyond the student's control, is not complete. An instructor may consider an "I" only with written authorization from the student's dean. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate the action. All work must be completed within 60 days of the end of the term.
- **Consideration of absences as an academic accommodation** - Consideration for absences may be granted as a formal academic accommodation to students who have physical and psychological disabilities that prevent them from attending class on a regular basis. This consideration is only applicable when class attendance is not an essential element of the course and when the absence is directly related to the documented disability. This accommodation is not a waiver of attendance requirements; class attendance is extremely important and while a student may have consideration for absences there is a point at which there are too many missed classes to make up the work and other options must be considered.

Notetaking and scribing services

LSU Shreveport utilizes a volunteer notetaker and/or test scribe system. This system can be coordinated in several ways. Students who have been granted this accommodation are first encouraged to locate another student within the class who is willing to share his/her notes. It is helpful if the student with a disability looks for a student who demonstrates regular attendance, attention in class, and a genuine interest in his/her education. The instructor may also be of assistance in locating and/or recommending a good student. The student with a disability is also asked to meet with the volunteer to express his/her needs in the classroom and to check over the shared notes with the instructor.

It is recommended that the identified volunteer meet with the student and the Dean of Students to discuss notetaking habits and make arrangements for transfer of notes. Carbonless paper can be provided for ease of transferring notes between the student and the volunteer. Alternately, copies of notes can be provided in cases where NCR paper is not utilized.

Scribes for testing should be coordinated between the Dean of Students and the instructor. These scribes also work on a volunteer basis. It is important to maintain test integrity at all times. For this reason, family members will not be assigned scribing duties for testing. However, they may serve as volunteer notetakers.

APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION BY DISABILITY TYPE

Appropriate documentation is important in establishing the most appropriate accommodations and will vary according to the specifics of the disabling condition. SSD regards disability-related information in its possession as educational records and as such recommends that any information provided is limited to that necessary to establish a substantial limitation and the right to an academic accommodation. General guidelines for documentation are provided above. Additional information useful in developing the most appropriate accommodations is provided below.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Documentation for students with ADHD should:

- be from a qualified professional (e.g., physician, licensed psychologist or neuropsychologist);
- include a comprehensive social history as well as an educational and psychological assessment;
- identify an actual diagnosis of an impairment according to *DSM-5*;
- discuss functional limitations in an academic environment which are caused by the impairment;
- recommend accommodations to compensate for identified functional limitations; and
- list current medication, dosages, and existing side effects.

Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Documentation for students with hearing impairments should:

- be from a licensed audiologist;
- discuss the functional limitations in an academic environment which are caused by the impairment; and
- describe accommodations to compensate for identified functional limitations.

Learning Disabilities

Documentation for students with a specific learning disability should:

- include a thorough diagnostic interview, including developmental, psychosocial and academic histories, a discussion of the absences of medical basis for the symptoms, and a discussion of dual diagnoses where indicated.
- consist of a comprehensive neuropsychological or psychoeducational evaluation resulting in the diagnosis of a specific learning disability, including an assessment of aptitude, achievement, and information processing.
- address current limitations caused the impairment.
- describe suggestions of reasonable accommodations to compensate for the limitations and which are supported by the diagnosis.

Physical Disabilities

Documentation for students with physical impairments should:

- be from a qualified professional (e.g., physician, licensed psychologist, or neuropsychologist);
- identify an actual diagnosis of an impairment;
- discuss the functional limitations in an academic environment which are caused by the impairment;
- recommend accommodations to compensate for identified functional limitations, and
- list current medication, dosages and existing side effects.

Psychological Disabilities

Documentation for students with psychological impairments should:

- be from a qualified mental health professional (e.g., psychiatrist, licensed professional counselor, board certified social worker);
- identify an actual diagnosis of an impairment according to the *DSM-5*;
- discuss functional limitations in an academic environment which are caused by the impairment;
- recommend accommodations to compensate for identified functional limitations, and
- list current medication, dosages, and existing (not possible) side effects.

Visual Disabilities

Documentation for students with visual impairments should:

- be from a qualified professional;
- discuss functional limitations in an academic environment which are caused by the impairment; and
- recommend accommodations to compensate for identified functional limitations.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND STUDENT INFORMATION

Services for Students with Disabilities is committed to ensuring that all disability-related information regarding a student is maintained as confidential as required or permitted by any law. Any information collected and maintained is considered an educational record and is used for the benefit of the student. This information may include test data, grades, biographical history, disability information, accommodation recommendations, performance review, and case notes.

SSD will retain a copy of all information provided. The student has a right to review these records. No one has immediate access to student files except the Dean of Students staff. However, as these records are considered educational records, SSD may disclose disability related information with other university personnel with a legitimate educational interest. That is, in the provision of services it **may** become necessary for disability-related information to be shared with other university personnel properly involved in evaluating and responding to requests for accommodation (i.e. instructor, dean, chair). SSD will make every effort to limit disclosure of information to student's identity, learning preferences, functional limitations, and explanation of recommended accommodations. Any disclosures outside the university will require the student's written permission, unless the student poses a danger to self/others or in instances when SSD has been legally ordered to release the information pursuant to a court order.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The University strives to resolve conflict at the lowest level possible. When a question arises about the denial or appropriateness of an accommodation, it is the responsibility of the faculty members and students with disabilities to first consult with the Dean of Students in a timely manner. The Dean of Students will work with the faculty and the students to resolve accommodation disagreements. Faculty members who question the legitimacy of an SSD recommended accommodation should continue to afford the accommodation to the student while the appeals procedures are implemented.

If the dispute over accommodation cannot be resolved at that level, an appeal may be filed with the Disability Advisory Committee. Students needing information regarding the appeals procedure can contact the Dean of Students.

In cases where a student believes his or her civil rights has been violated, a complaint may be filed with the Director of Student Advocacy & Accountability. In general, the formal complaint should be in writing, contain the name and address of the person filing, and briefly describe the alleged violation of the regulation.

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH PROFESSORS

1. It is to the student's advantage to introduce him/herself to each instructor as soon as possible. The student may consider making an appointment with him/her in order to speak candidly and privately about any special needs that may arise.
2. Be confident, pleasant, and respectful. All students are encouraged to practice an assertive, reasonable approach in communicating their needs.
3. It is not necessary to inform the instructor of the specific disability. However, the instructor may be better able to meet special needs/requests if he/she has basic information regarding how the disability impacts classroom functioning.
4. Communicate in plain, simple terms. For example, "I cannot see material on the board or read regular print."
5. Should difficulties arise in a particular class, students are encouraged to express concerns to the instructor and prepare suggestions for alternative solutions.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

While serving the entire LSUS community, the following offices routinely provide especially valuable services to students with disabilities.

Career Services is located in the Student Success Center within the Noel Memorial Library. The center assists students and alumni with career exploration, information on possible careers, and strategies for success in the job market. Appointments can be made by calling 797-5062.

Counseling Services is located in the Administration Building, Room 230. Counseling Services assists students with personal and/or wellness concerns. Appointments can be made by calling 797-5365 (Voice/TDD). Walk-in appointments are also available.

Physical Plant is responsible for maintaining the physical condition and accessibility of the LSUS campus. Any problems with physical accessibility should be addressed to the director of the Physical Plant at 797-5260.

Student Housing offers adapted housing to students with disabilities through the University Court Apartments. Both efficiencies and four-bedroom apartments are available. For more information, contact University Court at 797-8588.

Student Success Center offers a variety of academic support services, such as tutoring, academic coaching, and supplemental instruction. The center is located in the Noel Memorial Library.

University Police is located in the Administration Building, Room 124. University Police provide parking decals to all students. With sufficient documentation, students with mobility problems are provided special parking permits.

OTHER RESOURCES

There are a number of organizations, public and private, non-profit and otherwise, that serve persons with disabilities. A brief list of resources is provided; however, it would be beneficial to any individual with a disability to contact these and other organizations that can offer services.

General Information

Association for Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD) - (614) 488-7972 (Voice/TDD)
HEATH Resource Center - (800) 544-3284 (Voice/TDD)
The Family Village – maintained by University of Wisconsin; www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/index.html

Chronic Health Impairment

Arthritis Foundation
1330 West Peachtree Street
Atlanta, GA 30309

Epilepsy Foundation of America
4351 Garden City Dr.
Landover, MD 20785

AIDS Action Council
2033 M Street, NW, Suite 802
Washington, D.C. 20036

National Kidney Foundation of Louisiana
8200 Hampson St., Ste. 425
New Orleans, LA 70118

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
6931 Arlington Rd.
Bethesda, MD 20814

United Cerebral Palsy Association
1660 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

American Diabetes Association
1660 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Hearing Impairment

American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association
P.O. Box 25154
Little Rock, AR 72225

Deaf Action Center of NW Louisiana
601 Jordan Street
Shreveport, LA 71101

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf
4217 Volta Place NW
Washington, DC. 20007

National Captioning Institute
5203 Leesburg Pike, Suite 1500
Falls Church, VA 22041

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
10801 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Self-Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc.
7800 Wisconsin Ave.
Bethesda, MD 20814

Learning Disabilities

Council for Learning Disabilities
P.O. Box 40303
Overland Park, KS 66204

Learning Disabilities Network
25 Accord Park Dr.
Rockland, MA 02370

Learning Disabilities Association
4156 Library Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15234

National Center for Learning Disabilities
99 Park Ave., 6th Floor
New York, New York 10016

Center on Postsecondary Education for Students with Learning Disabilities
University of Connecticut, U-64
249 Glenbrook Rd.
Storrs, CT 06269

Mobility Impairments

American Amputee Foundation
2506 Riverfront Dr., #3
Little Rock, AR 72202

National Head Injury Foundation
1140 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 812
Washington, D.C. 20036

Gazette International Networking Institute
4506 Maryland Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63108

National Spinal Cord Injury Association
600 W. Cummings Park, Suite 2000
Woburn, MA 01801

RTA: The LIFT Handicapped Service
2817 Canal St.
New Orleans, LA 70119

Psychological Impairments

Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
Boston University
930 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, MA 02215

National Mental Health Consumer Self-Help
Clearinghouse
311 S. Juniper St., Suite 902
Philadelphia, PA 19107

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
2101 Wilson Blvd., Suite 302
Arlington, VA 22201

National Mental Health Association
1021 Prince St.
Alexandria, VA 22314

Visual Impairments

American Council for the Blind
1155 15th St., MW, Suite 720
Washington, D.C. 20005
American Foundation for the Blind
15 W. 16th Street
New York, New York 10011

American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.
1839 Frankfort Ave./ P.O. Box 6085
Louisville, KY 40206
National Alliance of Blind Students
1155 15th St., NW, Suite 720
Washington, D.C. 20005

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