

National Service Inclusion Project

www.serviceandinclusion.org

888-491-0326 (voice/TTY)

Fact Sheet

The Essential Functions of a Service Position

What is an essential function?

- A task or service duty that is critical to the position... If it is not performed, then the nature of the position is fundamentally changed.

Three factors that make a function essential:

- The position exists to perform a specific function.
 - "Participant will provide education through public speaking and information dissemination."
 - "Participant will read stories to preschool children in their homes."
- There are a limited number of other participants available to perform the function or among whom the function can be distributed.
 - "Participant will have a commercial vehicle driver's license."
 - "Participant must have previous experience installing drywall."
- A function is highly specialized and the person in the position is selected for special expertise or ability to perform it.
 - "Participant must have the ability to understand and communicate in Spanish and English."
 - "Participant will provide estate planning legal advice to participants at the senior day care center."

When identifying essential functions?

- Identify the purpose and importance of the task/function.

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- Consider the frequency with which the task/function is performed.
- Consider the amount of time required to perform the function.
- Consider the consequences if the function is not performed
- Essential functions must be completed, but they can often be completed in any variety of ways rather than in one particular manner