

PROCEDURE FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO REQUEST AN ACCOMMODATION UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Judiciary of the U.S. Virgin Islands (herein after referred to as “judiciary”) is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities have equal and full access to the judicial system. Access to the judicial system can mean physical access to enter or move about the judiciary’s buildings or the ability to participate fully in our programs and services. Any person who, has a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activity, has a record of such impairment or is regarded as having such impairment may request an accommodation.

1. A request for an accommodation can be made at any time. It is best, however, to make the request as far in advance as possible in order to allow time to review your request and to make arrangements for the accommodation, if needed. You should give a minimum of ten (10) working days’ notice, if possible. In emergency situations, the ten-day requirement can be waived, but you should make your request as soon as you know that you may need an accommodation.
2. A request can be made at any judicial location, over the telephone, by email. There are ADA Coordinators at each facility who can assist individuals with disabilities by answering specific questions about access to services and by processing requests for accommodations. The list of contact people and their email addresses are found below:

Judiciary of the U.S. Virgin Islands St. Croix District ADA Coordinators: Mr. Kevin Williams and Ms. Nissa Bailey Monday- Friday 8:00 am-5:00 pm Phone: (340) 778-9750 E-mail: ada@vicourts.org

Judiciary of the U.S. Virgin Islands St. Thomas/St. John District ADA Coordinators: Koya S. Ottley and Abena Meade Monday- Friday 8:00 am- 5:00 pm Telephone: (340) 774-2237 or (340)-774-6680 E-mail: ada@vicourts.org
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3. Although you can request an accommodation in any written form or orally, it is preferred that the request be made by completing a Request For Accommodation By Persons With Disabilities form. The form can be obtained at the above locations and on the judiciary’s website. Upon request, the form can be available in an alternative format, such as in Braille or large print. If you need help filling out the form, ask the ADA Coordinators or any other judicial personnel to help you. You may wish to attach other documents to the form, such as a doctor’s letter.
4. The accommodation request must include the full name, mailing address and contact information of the person making the request. If known, the request should state the type of service, access, and date(s) needed. The request should state the nature of the disability that makes an accommodation necessary and include a suggestion as to what would be a reasonable accommodation for the disability.

5. The accommodation requested may be for specific equipment and services, such as assistive listening devices, sign language interpreters or printed material in alternate formats.
6. Most requests for accommodation do not require proof to confirm the existence of a disability. In some cases, however, it is necessary to provide additional information in order to determine whether or not the person requesting the accommodation is a “qualified” person with a disability under the ADA or what accommodation is the most appropriate. The Judiciary of the U.S. Virgin Islands is committed to preserving confidentiality in every request for an accommodation. Information provided will be discussed only as necessary to decide if an accommodation is needed and the appropriate type of accommodation.
7. Many requests for accommodation can be granted immediately by the person to whom the request is made. Other requests involve further consideration, sometimes by an ADA Coordinator. You will be notified of the decision concerning your request as soon as possible. If an accommodation is appropriate, an effort is made to provide the accommodation that is suggested. If another accommodation will be equally effective in providing equal and full access to the Judiciary of the U.S. Virgin Islands, the alternate accommodation may be offered.
8. Although the judiciary is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities have equal and full access to the Judiciary of the U.S. Virgin Islands, some requests for an accommodation may be denied. The ADA does not require that an accommodation be provided to someone who is not a “qualified” individual with a disability. In addition, the ADA does not require actions that would cause a “fundamental alteration of a program or service” or would present an “undue financial or administrative burden.” Providing accommodations for some individuals with disabilities who appear in the courtroom as part of their employment duties or professional practice is a responsibility that appropriately may be shared by the individual’s employer and the judiciary. It is to everyone’s benefit when employers and the judiciary work together to ensure that reasonable accommodations for individuals are provided in the most efficient and cost effective manner.
9. The judiciary cannot administratively grant, as an ADA accommodation, requests that impact court procedures within a specific case or exceed the law.
10. If the request for accommodation is denied, or if you do not agree with the accommodation offered, you can file a grievance / complaint of the decision. The grievance must be filed no later than ten (10) days after the act or decision that forms the basis of the complaint. Information about the grievance process and grievance forms can be obtained at the above locations and on the judiciary’s webpage.