

# Policy Statement on Full Participation for Psychologists with Disabilities

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Adopted by the APA Council of Representatives, February 1997

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**Whereas** at any point in time, over 10 percent of the United States population has a visible disability (U.S. Census, 1995); and

**Whereas** attitudes about people with disabilities are often the most significant barrier keeping people with disabilities from performing to their full potential; thereby depriving society of a very valuable resource pool; and

**Whereas** psychologists with disabilities have been precluded from activities in which other psychologists participate due to a lack of environmental (physical, social, communicative and attitudinal) access; and

**Whereas** the American Psychology Association has historically taken a proactive position in opposition to discrimination against minority groups; and

**Whereas** in 1950, the association passed a resolution that stated that APA would hold its meetings only where there was no discrimination on the basis of race or religion; and

**Whereas** in 1974, APA adopted a resolution condemning discrimination based on social class and further committed itself to working toward the elimination of such barriers to education and employment in psychology; and

**Whereas** in 1975, the American Psychology Association in its support of the ERA stated "...denial of right to women, as to any other social category is a grave injustice;" and

**Whereas** in 1979, the Council of Representatives established the Association's commitment to full physical and social access at the annual APA convention by adopting the Guidelines on Physical and Social Accessibility; and

**Whereas** the Board of Convention Affairs has reaffirmed its continued commitment to the goals of the APA Guidelines on Physical and Social Accessibility and APA continues to work toward the goal of full convention accessibility; and

**Whereas** Article III.2 of the APA Bylaws specifies that all members shall be treated with respect and without discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, age mental or physical disability; and

**Whereas** Article III.2 further provides that this does not preclude the Association from fulfilling its obligations to carry out activities or programs that have as their goal the amelioration of conditions that may restrict members from full participation in the Association or its activities and programs; and

**Whereas** APA was involved in the development and the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which forbids discrimination against and requires reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities; and APA is committed to complying with this law; and

**Whereas** each time that the APA has taken the steps necessary to oppose discrimination against and to provide full and appropriate participation in the activities of the association for particular minority groups, the association has grown and benefited from the expanded knowledge base and richness of experience brought to it by members of those groups; and

**Whereas** the American Psychology Association has responded in appropriate and concrete ways to the ongoing and historical obstacles to adequate services for and full participation of ethnic minorities women and gay men and lesbians; and

**Whereas** there has been a growing recognition of people with disabilities as a minority group; and

**Whereas** APA recognizes that full access and participation for people with disabilities is a civil rights issue.

**Therefore be it resolved** that APA reaffirms its continued support for full compliance with the provisions and principles of the Americans with Disabilities Act and all other relevant statutes and pledges to meet the reasonable requirements of its members with disabilities when providing the services and benefits to which all members are entitled.

## REFERENCES

Dorge, C.A. (Ed). (1995). *The Statistical Record of Health and Medicine*. New York: International Thompson Publishing Co.

U.S. Department of Commerce. (1995). *The Statistical Abstract of the United States: the National Data Book* (114th edition). Washington, DC: Author.

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