



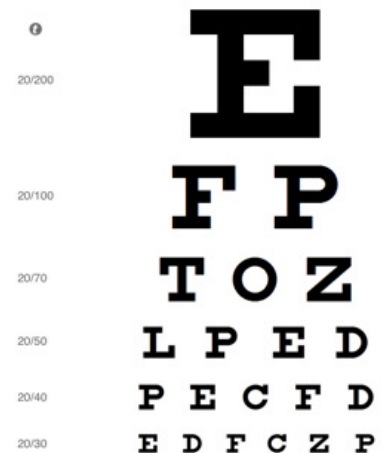
## Accommodations for a person with low vision or who is blind

A person may ask for specific accommodations. Persons who are blind or have low vision often become very early adopters of technology. They may have preferences for specific assistive technology. However, a person who is a participant in a hearing may not know enough about the hearing process to know what they need. No two persons with low vision or blindness are exactly alike.

- Blind means
  - Clinically blind, a complete loss of vision, or
  - Legally blind, a corrected vision of 20/200 in the better-seeing eye
- Low vision means a condition caused by eye disease with visual acuity at 20/70 or poorer in the better-seeing eye

A person who is legally blind wearing corrective lenses can see at 20 feet what the average person can see clearly at 200 feet. Most people in the United States are familiar with the eye chart in a doctor's office. While wearing corrective lenses, if from 20 feet away a person can only read the big "E" on the top line, the person is legally blind. If the smallest print a person can read while wearing glasses is the third line (T O Z), the person has "low vision."

It is important *not* to assume that a person who is blind or has low vision also has intellectual or other disabilities.



Accommodations and supports that may help individuals with low vision or blindness include:

- Enlarge font, or enlarge and bold font;
- Print notices, orders and written communications on colored paper;
- Place colored separator sheets to distinguish between documents;
- Place a colored sheet on top, to alert it is something received in the mail is important (so the person can arrange to have it read);
- Allow communication with OAH by email;
- Allow party to authorize OAH to send information by non-secure email;
- Send notices and orders by email in accessible format;



- ask if C.A.R.T. (Communication Access Realtime Translation) or closed captioning, or use of the Chat feature in TEAMS video hearings would be helpful for the party;
- Arrange for Braille translations of OAH documents, taking into account to meeting deadlines the time needed to obtain the translations;
- Allow extra time for the use an electronic Braille display or screen reader applications;
- Assign a staff person to read aloud case records, including those that are not in an accessible format;
- Allow time, and as needed space, for use of a magnifying sheet or lamp or other assistive device
- Modify the requirements for marking and identifying exhibits or assign a staff person or ADA team member to help organize, identify and mark exhibits and create an exhibit list;
- Modify processes that require something in writing; allow audio recordings or other alternative method of communication suited to the disability

### **Interacting with a customer who is blind or has low vision**

1. When greeting the person, identify yourself and introduce others who may be present.
2. Do not leave the person without excusing yourself first.
3. When asked to guide someone with a sight disability, never push or pull the person. Allow him or her to take your arm, then walk slightly ahead. Point out doors, stairs, or curbs, as you approach them.
4. As you enter a room with the person, describe the layout and location of furniture, etc.
5. Be specific when describing the location of objects. (Example: "There is a chair three feet from you at eleven o'clock.")
6. Do not pet or distract a guide dog. The dog is responsible for its owner's safety and is always working. It is not a pet.

**A Note on Privacy:** Having a disability does not, and should not ever, mean a person has to give up his or her privacy or confidentiality when providing information for paperwork. Other people who are able to complete the paperwork without assistance do not have to divulge personal information, such as name, address, phone number or work history, in a way that others can overhear. So, why should this happen to someone with a disability? It shouldn't. Therefore, when you help a customer complete any paperwork, you should move to another office or to some place in the room where you can work together without being overheard.