



Information for Applicants with Disabilities

The Mandela Washington Fellowship is committed to ensuring that Africa's young leaders with disabilities can fully participate in the Fellowship through reasonable accommodation and support. The Fellowship's disability support complies with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) - comprehensive legislation that prohibits discrimination and guarantees that people with disabilities can fully participate in American life. While the Fellowship provides appropriate resources to ensure Fellows can participate in the program, support services or accommodation may not be the same as what you are used to at home. When necessary, and if resources are available, IREX and institutes will provide additional support to Fellows using assistive technologies or accommodative services.

Q: If I am selected as a Fellow, what disability services will I have access to?

A: IREX and institutes will provide reasonable accommodations that allow you to access and participate in all required activities of the Fellowship. Reasonable accommodation will look different for each Fellow, and we will work closely with you to determine disability services that will allow you to fully participate in Fellowship programming.

Q: What does "reasonable accommodation" mean?

A: A reasonable accommodation is an adjustment or modification to the environment or the way something is done to remove barriers and ensure full participation. Not all people with a disability, even with the same disability, will require accommodation or the same accommodation. Examples of reasonable accommodation include:

- Physical disabilities: A motorized scooter; ramp access to buildings; and grab bars near the toilet and shower.
- Visual disabilities: Orientation and mobility training; JAWS screen reader software; and large-print materials.
- Hearing disabilities: Voice amplification device; preferred seating; and sign language interpretation.

Reasonable accommodation does not include full-feature smartphones like iPhones; medications; clothing; or other personal items Fellows use in their daily lives and can easily transport as part of their regular baggage.

Q: How will the Fellowship know my individual needs?

A: Prior to arrival to the United States, IREX will send a survey to all Fellows who self-identify as having a disability in their Fellowship application to request detailed information about their disability-related needs and health conditions. The information on this form will help IREX, your institute, and your Professional Development Experience organization (if applicable) provide the support you need during the Fellowship. The information you provide will not in any way impact program selection and is necessary for IREX to provide you with reasonable accommodation to fully participate in the program. When necessary, IREX will arrange a phone or video call, or email with Fellows to confirm their accommodation needs. Please keep in mind that final accommodation may be different from what



you initially requested in your survey or what you are used to in your home country, and will be determined in conversation with IREX to ensure your full participation.

Q: Will disclosing my disability impact my chances of being selected for the Fellowship?

A: No. The Fellowship is committed to a fair and merit-based selection process. The application includes a question about disability so that we are aware of what kinds of accommodations you may need if you are invited for an interview or selected for the Fellowship. IREX and the U.S. Department of State also use these responses for statistical purposes. Your answer to the question regarding disabilities is voluntary and will not impact your chances of selection.

Additional Resources

ASL Connect – ASL for Free

<https://www.gallaudet.edu/asl-connect/asl-for-free/asl-by-topic>

Video Interview with Mandela Washington Fellow Hilda Muluh Bih (captions available)

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/story/hilda>

Getting What You Need in the United States

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/disabilityneeds>

Disability Organizations in the United States

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/organizations>

Top 10 Disability Resources On-Campus

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/campusresources>

Your Rights and Responsibilities

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/rightsresponsibilities>