

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE

Inter-Departmental Memorandum Date September 19, 1985

To ALL DEPARTMENT HEADS Dept. _____
From Joseph E. Brennan, Governor *JSB* Dept. _____
Subject HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBILITY: AMENDED EXECUTIVE ORDER

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and its subsequent enabling Federal regulations require that recipients of Federal funds do not discriminate on the basis of handicap. In recognition of the State of Maine's responsibility to comply with this law I issued Executive Order 9FY 81/82 on February 18, 1982 which established the Office of State Handicapped Accessibility Coordinator to assist and monitor State agencies in their compliance activities with State and Federal laws protecting the rights of handicapped persons.

I also directed all department heads to appoint departmental 504 Coordinators to work with the State Handicapped Accessibility Coordinator. A State 504 Advisory Council, made up of people who were handicapped or who represented handicapped individuals was also formed. All Executive Branch agencies have now completed self-evaluations referred to as their "504 Plans" and had the assistance of handicapped people through the State 504 Advisory Council.

I congratulate you on the great strides you have made over the past several years to comply with 504. The results: state government makes its programs, activities, and services accessible to handicapped people; qualified interpreters are provided to the deaf and hearing impaired; readers or taped messages are made available to the blind and visually impaired; and there are accessible programs to the mobility impaired.

Having reached this step, it is timely to make some minor adjustments in the Executive Order in order to be more responsive to current issues, including the following:

1. There is confusion in the public's mind as to the extent of authority of the Office of State Handicapped Accessibility Coordinator. The confusion usually comes from architects who ascribe to that office the authority which properly belongs to the Bureau of Public Improvements. In order to clarify this issue, I have amended the Executive Order to make clear what authority belongs to the Bureau of Public Improvements.
2. I recently signed into law P.L. 1985, C. 385, "An Act Relating to a Grievance Procedure Concerning Discrimination on the Basis of Handicap." It will create a grievance procedure administered by the Maine Department of Human Services applicable to all State agencies

3. Another area which the State will address is to assure that private agencies which receive Federal funds through the State do not discriminate against handicapped individuals.

4. The Office of State Handicapped Accessibility Coordinator has identified a large need for technical assistance outside State government. Schools, libraries, municipalities, businesses, churches, and hospitals are seeking technical assistance in the fields of handicapped accessibility and awareness. The Office of State 504 Coordinator and the Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped will work closely to meet these needs.

Attached is the amended Executive Order. Please provide a copy of this to appropriate staff. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact either Nancy Brenerman of my office or Brian Trask, the State Handicapped Accessibility Coordinator at 289-2141.

JEB/gwd

Attachment