

Resolution Agreement
Souris Valley Special Services
Case Number 05-16-1208

Souris Valley Special Services (SVSS) submits the following resolution agreement ("Agreement") to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights ("OCR") in resolution of OCR complaint #05-16-1208. SVSS submits this Agreement to ensure its compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 794, and its implementing regulation, at 34 C.F.R. Part 104, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), 42 U.S.C. § 12132, and its implementing regulation, at 28 C.F.R. Part 35.

Assurances of Nondiscrimination. SVSS hereby reaffirms its commitment to ensure that people with disabilities have an opportunity equal to that of their nondisabled peers to participate in SVSS's programs, benefits, and services, including those delivered through electronic and information technology, except where doing so would impose an undue burden or create a fundamental alteration.

Benchmarks for Measuring Accessibility. For the purposes of this Agreement, the accessibility of online content and functionality will be measured according to the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C's) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA and the Web Accessibility Initiative Accessible Rich Internet Applications Suite (WAI-ARIA) 1.0 for web content, which are incorporated by reference.

Adherence to these accessible technology standards is one way to ensure compliance with SVSS's underlying legal obligations to ensure people with disabilities are able to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same benefits and services within the same timeframe as their nondisabled peers, with substantially equivalent ease of use; that they are not excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in any SVSS programs, services, and activities delivered online, as required by Section 504 and Title II and their implementing regulations; and that they receive effective communication of SVSS's programs, services, and activities delivered online.

SVSS voluntarily agrees to take the actions set forth below.

Remedies and Reporting

- 1) Policies and Procedures Regarding New Online Content and Functionality. By December 16, 2016, SVSS will submit to OCR for its review and approval proposed policies and procedures ("the Plan for New Content") to ensure that all new, newly-added, or modified online content and functionality will be accessible to people with disabilities as measured by conformance to the Benchmarks for Measuring Accessibility set forth above, except where doing so would impose a fundamental alteration or undue burden.

- a) When fundamental alteration or undue burden defenses apply as outlined in Item 2, the Plan for New Content will require SVSS to provide equally effective alternative access. The Plan for New Content will require SVSS in providing equally effective alternate access, to take any actions that do not result in a fundamental alteration or undue financial and administrative burdens, but nevertheless ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, individuals with disabilities receive the same benefits or services as their nondisabled peers. To provide equally effective alternate access, alternates are not required to produce the identical result or level of achievement for persons with and without disabilities, but must afford persons with disabilities equal opportunity to obtain the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement, in the most integrated setting appropriate to the person's needs.
 - b) The Plan for New Content must include sufficient quality assurance procedures, backed by adequate personnel and financial resources, for full implementation. This provision also applies to SVSS's online content and functionality developed by, maintained by, or offered through a third-party vendor or by using open sources.
 - c) Within thirty (30) days of receiving OCR's approval of the Plan for New Content, SVSS will officially adopt, and fully implement the amended policies and procedures.
 - d) Reporting: Within 45 calendar days of receiving OCR's approval, SVSS will submit to OCR the approved policies and procedures, evidence of their adoption and distribution, and a description of how they are being implemented.
- 2) Undue Burden and Fundamental Alteration. For any technology-related requirement in this Agreement for which SVSS asserts an undue burden or fundamental alteration defense, such assertion may only be made by the Director or by an individual designated by the Director and who has budgetary authority after considering all resources available for use in the funding and operation of the service, program, or activity, and must be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion, including the cost of meeting the requirement and the available funding and other resources. The written statement will be certified by the determining official. If such a determination is made, the certifying official will describe in the written statement how it will provide equally effective alternate access, *i.e.*, other action that would not result in such an alteration or such burdens but would nevertheless ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, individuals with disabilities receive the same benefits or services provided by SVSS as their nondisabled peers.
- a) Reporting: Within 30 calendar days of making the determination, SVSS will submit the written statement and appropriate supporting documentation to OCR for review and approval. This reporting requirement will cease when OCR closes the monitoring of this Agreement.
- 3) Audit of Existing Content and Functionality. By November 30, 2016, SVSS will propose for OCR's review and approval the identity and credentials of an Auditor (corporation or individual) to audit all content and functionality on its website, including, but not limited

to, the home page, all subordinate pages, and sites, to identify any online content or functionality that is inaccessible to persons with disabilities, including online content and functionality developed by, maintained by, or offered through a third party vendor or an open source. The Auditor will have sufficient knowledge and experience in website accessibility for people with disabilities to carry out all related tasks, including developing a Proposed Corrective Action Plan. The Audit will use the Benchmarks for Measuring Accessibility set out above, unless SVSS receives prior permission from OCR to use a different standard as a benchmark. During the Audit, SVSS will also seek input from members of the public with disabilities, including parents, students, employees, and others associated with SVSS, and other persons knowledgeable about website accessibility, regarding the accessibility of its online content and functionality.

- a) Reporting: By November 30, 2016, SVSS will submit the credentials of its proposed Auditor to OCR for review and approval. OCR will evaluate whether the proposed Auditor has the requisite experience and knowledge to carry out an appropriate Audit and to develop a Proposed Corrective Action Plan. Within ninety (90) calendar days of receiving OCR's approval of the proposed Auditor, SVSS will submit to OCR documentation of the steps taken by the Auditor during the Audit, a description of the outreach it undertook and the input it received, and a detailed accounting of the results of the Audit.
- 4) Proposed Corrective Action Plan. By March 3, 2017, SVSS will submit to OCR for its review and approval a proposed Corrective Action Plan to address all inaccessible content and functionality identified during SVSS's Audit. The proposed Corrective Action Plan will set out a detailed schedule for: (1) addressing problems, taking into account identified priorities, with all corrective actions to be completed within 18 months of the date OCR approved the Corrective Action Plan; (2) setting up systems of accountability and verifying claims of accessibility by vendors or open sources; and setting up a system of testing and accountability to maintain the accessibility of all online content and functionality on an ongoing basis.
- 5) Within 30 calendar days of receiving OCR's approval of the proposed Corrective Action Plan, SVSS will officially adopt and implement the Corrective Action Plan.
 - a) Reporting: Within 45 calendar days of receiving OCR's approval of the proposed Corrective Action Plan, SVSS will submit to OCR the approved Corrective Action Plan, and documentation establishing that the approved Corrective Action Plan is being implemented according to the approved schedule. Reports will be due every six months thereafter until the Corrective Action Plan has been completed.
- 6) Notice. Within 30 calendar days of the date of this Agreement, SVSS will submit to OCR for review and approval a proposed notice to persons with disabilities regarding how to request the webmaster or other appropriate person to provide access to (or notify SVSS regarding) online information or functionality that is currently inaccessible. The proposed notice will also include information or an accessible link to information instructing people how to file formal grievances under Section 504 and Title II and the Section 504

coordinator. Within 10 calendar days of receiving OCR's approval of the proposed notice, SVSS will officially adopt and prominently post the approved notice on its home page and throughout its website (including all subordinate pages and intranet sites).

- a) Reporting. Within 15 calendar days of receiving OCR's approval of SVSS's proposed notice, SVSS will provide documentation to OCR regarding the locations and content of its published notice.
- 7) Training on website accessibility. By November 30, 2016, and annually thereafter, SVSS will deliver website accessibility training to all appropriate personnel, including, but not limited to: content developers, webmasters, procurement officials, and all others responsible for developing, loading, maintaining, or auditing web content and functionality.
 - a) Reporting: For each training session required by this Agreement, until such time as OCR closes the monitoring of this Agreement, SVSS will submit to OCR documentation that it has been delivered. The documentation will include a list of invitees and attendees, including titles; a description of the delivered training content; and the presenters' credentials for giving such training.
- 8) Designation of Section 504 Coordinator, Notice of Nondiscrimination, and Adoption of Grievance Procedures.
 - a) Section 504 Coordinator: By October 31, 2016, SVSS will designate and adequately train at least one person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Section 504 (Section 504 Coordinator).
 - b) Notice of Nondiscrimination: By October 31, 2016, SVSS will revise its Notice of Nondiscrimination (Notice) to reflect that it applies to employees and applicants as well as to students and parents/guardians in the District. The revised Notice will include the Section 504 Coordinator's name, title, mailing address, telephone number and email address and, upon OCR approval, SVSS will make this Notice available through its website as well as by any other means of notification SVSS deems necessary to ensure that the information is widely disseminated.
 - c) Adoption of Grievance Procedures: By October 31, 2016, SVSS will adopt grievance procedures that incorporate appropriate due process standards and that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of any complaints alleging any action prohibited by Section 504. The grievance procedures will apply to complaints filed by or against students, parents/guardians, employees of SVSS, and third parties. SVSS will ensure that its grievance procedures include, at a minimum, the following:
 1. An explanation of how to report disability discrimination and/or file a complaint including the name or the individual who receives the reports, and the address, phone number and email address for SVSS's Section 504 Coordinator;
 2. A description of the complaint procedure, including but not limited to:

- i. Designated and reasonably prompt timeframes for major stages of the investigation and for completion of the investigation of a complaint and the process for extending the timeframes;
 - ii. An explanation that to the extent the parties are given an opportunity to present evidence, they will be provided an equal opportunity to do so;
 - iii. A requirement that written notice of the outcome of the complaint will be provided to both parties;
 - iv. A prohibition of retaliation against persons who report disability discrimination and/or participate in related hearings or investigations, and a statement that SVSS will discipline individuals who engage in retaliation; and
 - v. An assurance that SVSS will take action to stop disability discrimination, remedy its effects, and prevent its recurrence.
 - d) Reporting: By October 31, 2016, SVSS will submit to OCR for its review and approval its revised Notice of Nondiscrimination and Grievance Procedures referenced in this Item. OCR will notify SVSS of any required changes after receiving the revised Notice of Nondiscrimination and Grievance Procedures. Within 15 days of OCR's approval, SVSS will widely publish the Notice of Nondiscrimination and Grievance Procedures by posting them on SVSS's website and in other materials that SVSS deems appropriate. SVSS will submit documentation that it published the Notice of Nondiscrimination and Grievance Procedures referenced in this Item within 30 days of publication.
- 9) Training on Section 504 Grievance Procedures: By January 31, 2017, and annually thereafter, SVSS will deliver training to all SVSS personnel on its Grievance Procedures adopted pursuant to Item 8(c) of this Agreement.
- 10) Training on Section 504 Grievance Procedures for Staff Responsible for Investigating Complaints: By January 31, 2017, and annually thereafter for newly hired staff, SVSS will train all SVSS staff who are directly involved in processing, investigating, and/or resolving complaints or other reports of disability discrimination. The training will review SVSS' Grievance Procedures, adopted pursuant to Item 8(c) of this Agreement and include instruction on how to conduct and document adequate, reliable, and impartial disability discrimination investigations, including the appropriate legal standards to apply in such investigations.
- a) Reporting: For each training session required by this Agreement, until such time as OCR closes the monitoring of this Agreement, SVSS will submit to OCR documentation that it has been delivered within 30 days of the completion of the training. The documentation will include a list of invitees and attendees, including titles; a description of the delivered training content, including copies of the materials used in the training; and the name and credentials of the presenters responsible for delivering the training.

SVSS understands that OCR will not close the monitoring of this Agreement until OCR determines that SVSS has fulfilled the terms of this Agreement and is in compliance with the regulations implementing Section 504, at 34 C.F.R. §§ 104.4, 104.7, and 104.8, and Title II, at 28 C.F.R. §§ 35.130, and 35.160(a), which were at issue in this case.

SVSS also understands that by signing this Agreement, it agrees to provide data and other information in a timely manner in accordance with the reporting requirements of this Agreement. Further, SVSS understands that during the monitoring of this Agreement, if necessary, OCR may visit SVSS, interview staff, and request such additional reports or data, including simulated website accounts and passwords, as are necessary for OCR to determine whether SVSS has fulfilled the terms of this Agreement and is in compliance with the regulations implementing Section 504, at 34 C.F.R. §§ 104.4, 104.7, and 104.8, and Title II, at 28 C.F.R. §§ 35.130, and 35.160(a), which were at issue in this case.

SVSS understands and acknowledges that OCR may initiate administrative enforcement or judicial proceedings to enforce the specific terms and obligations of this Agreement. Before initiating administrative enforcement (34 C.F.R. §§ 100.9, 100.10), or judicial proceedings to enforce this Agreement, OCR shall give SVSS written notice of the alleged breach and sixty (60) calendar days to cure the alleged breach.

On Behalf of SVSS

Date