

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

In 2013, The Bahamas signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This means that as a nation we agree to uphold and promote international standards on how we address the issues of persons with disabilities.

The purpose of the present Convention is *“to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”* *

Everyone in society has a duty to understand the rights of people with disabilities and to ensure these rights are protected and exercised. In the past, disabled people have been viewed as individuals who require protection and sympathy rather than respect and dignity. The UN Convention and The Bahamas’ Persons with Disabilities Act are huge steps towards changing the perception of disability and ensuring that societies recognize that all people must be provided with the opportunities to live life to their fullest potential.

* Article 1—United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

For more information on the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities) 2014, Act, how it affects you and your business, and how you can help, please view a copy of the Act online at www.bahamas.gov.bs/socialservices You may also contact the Secretariat of The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities; we will be happy to answer your questions, arrange an onsite meeting with you, or provide disabilities-related training/ orientation for your staff.



**The Secretariat of
The National Commission for Persons
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Protecting Rights
Promoting Responsibility
Ensuring Accessibility
Advancing Equal Opportunities

Know Your Rights & Responsibilities

**Tips for persons
with disabilities
and their
caregivers**



**The National Commission
for Persons with Disabilities**

It's the Law

The Bahamas' Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities) Act, 2014, was enacted to end discrimination against persons with disabilities as well as promote their rights and provide equal opportunities, amongst other provisions.

Did you know that The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities is a statutory body that has been mandated to carry out the provisions of the Act? The Commission has the responsibility to:

- Ensure that the rights of all persons with disabilities are respected and upheld;
- Recommend measures to prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities;
- Register all persons with disabilities as well as register all organizations for persons with disabilities;
- Ensure adequate accessibility to health care, education and employment opportunities;
- Monitor, evaluate and ensure compliance with the International Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities;

In order for you to exercise your rights you have to know them! The National Commission encourages you to become familiar with your rights as enshrined in the Act.

Your Rights

As a person with a disability you have rights that are protected under the law. If you are a caregiver of a person with a disability, your dependant has these same rights, which include:

The right to be treated with dignity and respect, free from discrimination;

The right to equal access to opportunities for suitable employment, as well as equal access to training, education and health care services.

The right to a barrier-free and disabled-friendly environment enabling you to access buildings, social amenities, transportation and services;

The right, upon request, to be assisted by a person of your choice in voting in parliamentary elections or referendums.

If you feel that you have been discriminated against by a business, a provider of service or your employer, **you have the right** to file a complaint to the Commission for Persons with Disabilities as well as take legal action if necessary.



Your Responsibilities

With rights come responsibility. The Government of The Bahamas, through the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, is committed to doing its part to protect and promote your rights. Here are some things you too can do:

Always treat others with the same dignity, courtesy and respect that you are entitled to.

Learn as much as you can about the Persons with Disabilities Act and help to educate your family, friends and others around you.

Register with the National Commission of Persons with Disabilities.

Participate in community organizations, programs and development opportunities that will help you develop and achieve your potential.

Don't tolerate discrimination. If you feel you are being treated unfairly by a business place and you make a respectful complaint that is not being addressed, then contact the Commission in a timely manner. We're here to help.