# Disability Laws

## Definitions

We wanted to highlight some important laws that can have a direct impact on individuals with disabilities, including those with a visual impairment, in higher education, the workplace, and in the community. Before we dive into some of these laws, let’s start with a video from the [Disability & Philanthropy Forum](https://disabilityphilanthropy.org/) to help us understand some of the history that led to the formation of these important laws.

[Disability History: An Introduction-video (disabilityphilanthropy.org)](https://youtu.be/e9lkvA2LwkA?si=onl7N90t9iuluVbe)

[Disability History: An introduction-video transcript (disabilityphilanthropy.org)](https://disabilityphilanthropy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/disability-history-an-introduction.pdf)

There are two federal laws that prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities: the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For a brief summary, we encourage you to review EMPOWER VI’s [January Monthly Deep Dive: ADA and Rehabilitation Act of 1973](http://us3.campaign-archive.com/?u=fd5a09f5d46220521eae91c06&id=ec61860496).

If you are interested in learning more about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Fair Housing Act (FHA) and how these laws and the laws mentioned above relate to education, please review [Disability Law Summary K-12 vs. Higher Education](https://www.empowervi.org/resources/disability-law-summary-k-12-vs-higher-education). This screen-reader accessible table summarizes four primary laws pertaining to K-12 legal requirements for accommodations vs higher education legal requirements for accommodations.

## Guiding Questions

* What is your understanding of disability laws?
* What does disability discrimination mean to you?
* Is there any aspect of disability law that you want to know more about?
* What does advocating for your rights mean to you?
* What is your understanding about how disability laws support accommodations for people with disabilities?

## Resources

[Disability Rights and Laws | American Foundation for the Blind (afb.org)](https://www.afb.org/blindness-and-low-vision/disability-rights) provides links that summarize important aspects of disability laws. This website also allows you to learn more about their current advocacy efforts, and how you can use AFB research to advocate locally for the issues that are most important to you.

[Guide your student to know their rights: IDEA and the ADA – Perkins School for the Blind](https://www.perkins.org/resource/guide-your-student-to-know-their-rights-idea-and-the-ada/) is directed toward educators but this site offers great information on the differences between IDEA and ADA and how students can be prepared when leaving high school.

[ADA Library (askjan.org)](https://askjan.org/ADA-Library.cfm) provides various links describing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 2008.