

For Immediate Release:  
August 31, 2015

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### Richmond Amtrak Station violates the ADA

Amtrak's Staples Mill Station in Richmond will be required to stop discriminating against people with disabilities, according to a letter of findings issued this week by the United States Department of Transportation (DOT). DOT concluded that the Staples Mill Amtrak Station failed to make its facilities accessible to people who are deaf or have limited hearing.

The disAbility Law Center of Virginia filed a complaint with DOT, pointing out the Staples Mill Station's failure to effectively communicate with people who are deaf, in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The station has no TTY telephone and makes announcements over loudspeaker that are not also provided visually. Riders who are deaf or hard of hearing are unaware of scheduling changes and other information essential to their travels. "Twenty five years after the passage of the ADA, there is no excuse for Amtrak to be failing these customers," said Colleen Miller, the director of the disAbility Law Center of Virginia.

The DOT decision requires the Staples Mill Amtrak Station to provide captions on its TV displays, add an improved Public Information Display System to address the TTY deficiency and ensure accessibility of its announcements, and to expand training and education for its service personnel to assist individuals with vision and hearing disabilities appropriately. Amtrak will also provide onboard information displays on intercity rail cars in future equipment purchase.

This DOT finding comes months after the Department of Justice determined that multiple Amtrak stations nationwide fail to provide full access to people with disabilities. The Staples Mill finding from DOT incorporates provisions regarding website and telephone applications from the DOJ decision as well.

The disAbility Law Center of Virginia is a nonprofit organization that serves as the state's designated protection and advocacy system. The dLCV's mission is to fight abuse and neglect and to encourage that people with disabilities have choice, independence and inclusion in all aspects of life.

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