
From: Solace [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 07, 2020 12:12 PM
To: Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL MESSAGE] the disability community LMI is 60%, needs to be included

To: Office of the Comptroller of the Currency

RE: Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Community Reinvestment Act Regulations

March 7th, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPR) to reform the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) ignores the importance of including low- and moderate- income people with disabilities in community development activities. As a result, the disability community in my area strongly opposes the proposed rulemaking **in its current form** and recommends that the NPR be **revised to address the financial and economic needs of low- and moderate- income people with disabilities.**

Finances severely limit the types of wellness and self help activities people with disabilities can do to improve their wellbeing, for example the lack of public transportation to get to free community activities or support groups. There are many barriers to this community in reaching an equitable level for others in the same demographic without disabilities.

People with disabilities are more likely to be low- or moderate-income (LMI) than those without disabilities. More than 60 percent of adults with disabilities are considered LMI and many to live in LMI neighborhoods. People with disabilities are often excluded from mainstream financial services. They are less likely to be banked or have access to mainstream credit. If revised with attention to the comments below, the proposed rule changes to the CRA have the potential to address the needs of this underserved population.

We are particularly concerned about the following four omissions:

- Qualified Activities, as defined in the NPR, contain no examples of LMI people with disabilities benefitting from investments, lending and/or service activities. This omission offers regulated financial institutions no specific ways to meet the needs of this underserved population.
- The qualifying CRA activities list has eliminated the possibility for banks to receive CRA credit for investment in economic and workforce development activities including apprenticeships, internships, on-the-job skills training and skill certifications that are vitally important to many LMI populations, including those with disabilities.
- The NPR does not require banks to disaggregate reporting data by gender/race/ethnicity or disability, thereby failing to compel banks to address the historical lack of access and equitable treatment of sub-populations of the LMI community.
- The NPR discusses the applicability of seven other relevant laws that address discrimination, but fails to include the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This oversight continues the lack of attention to this most economically vulnerable population and their financial and economic needs. Since the passage of the ADA, financial institutions have in multiple court cases been found in violation of the ADA for lack of website accessibility and discriminating practices regarding access to credit.

Vibrant communities are best supported when economic opportunities are inclusive of LMI populations, including people with disabilities. Unless the challenges of LMI people with disabilities are intentionally addressed, people with disabilities will be unintentionally excluded from the financial system and overlooked as a target of community development activities.

The regulatory agencies need to revise the NPR in its current form and offer a set of rules that maintains the intent of the CRA and includes low- and moderate-income people, including those with disabilities.

Thank you for your attention to and support of our comments.

Sincerely,

Bethel Landis