

ADA Compliance for Public & Community-based Organizations

ACCESSIBILITY IN PUBLIC SPACES

ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law in 1990. The law sets standards to ensure people with disabilities have equal and full access in society.

ALL DISABILITIES

The ADA extends to people with all types of disabilities, visible and invisible. People using a wheelchair have a visible access need, but someone with hearing loss or diabetes may have less clear needs.

COMMUNICATION

Plan to meet and exceed ADA standards. Not only does the physical infrastructure of the building need to be accessible, but signage, materials, equipment, and other forms of communication need to have accessibility built in.

BROAD BENEFITS

ADA standards ensure people with disabilities have equal access to public spaces, but many community members can benefit from modifications and accessible features. This is

known as [“The Curb-cut Effect.”](#)



- Although **ADA has been the law for over 35 years**, many buildings are not compliant and pose risks and barriers for community access.
- All accessibility features are required to be in usable and working order at all times. This requires regular maintenance and ensuring that areas are not blocked.
- Information about the accessibility of buildings, programs, other services, and areas under the operation of each public entity must be made available to the community in an accessible format.
- The **ADA is an enforceable law**, meaning that entities that fail to meet standards not only are likely to be cutting community members off from essential services, but they also risk federal and/or civil lawsuits as a result of noncompliance.
- While many public entities and community organizations are not in full compliance with ADA, **experts understand that there are many barriers** including a lack of funding, knowledge, training, and guidance.

WHAT CAN ORGANIZATIONS DO?

Public and community-based organizations can do several things to improve the accessibility of their facilities and programs. The first step is to evaluate where they are at and prioritize what needs to be fixed. There are many ways to do this, including reviewing their current accessible features, policies, and determining if these meet ADA guidance.

WHAT HELP IS AVAILABLE?

There are also many experts and trainings to support organizations in pursuing accessibility across their facilities and programs. The IDRPP offers an [accessibility resource directory](#) and trainings for public and community-based organizations, in addition to our [WebAIM](#) team who specialize in digital and web accessibility.

The IDRPP can also conduct onsite accessibility assessments at any type of facility, as well as comprehensive organizational and policy assessments. Reach out to us on our [website](#) or via phone to be connected with the right member of our staff to help your organization.

