

Sometimes a group of people works best. Inform city officials (the mayor, councilman/woman, inspectors and fire chiefs) of problem areas, especially if there is concern for bodily harm.

No one has to comply with the ADA immediately. The ADA also protects some small businesses because becoming accessible would cause "undue hardship." In some areas, especially rural, accessibility issues are not feasible - but it does not hurt to try.

This brochure can in no way be all-inclusive nor address all areas of concern to people with disabilities and their families. Our intent is to give the reader a good starting point with a few ideas of what needs to be accessible and who to contact.

Remember, to expect life to be fair is unrealistic; to expect equality for all is hoping beyond hope. Together, as a team, we can make living in our respective communities much more enjoyable by watching out for each other. Teamwork is always more productive than an individual effort, and usually more fun too!

## *Who to Contact for More Information:*

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity  
Commission  
1801 L Street NW  
Washington, DC 20507

U.S. Department of Justice  
Civil Rights Division  
Public Access Section  
P.O. Box 66738  
Washington, DC 20035-6738

Architectural and Transportation Barriers  
Compliance Board  
1331 F Street NW Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20004-1111

Also, visit our website for a full text version of the Americans with Disabilities Act: [www.maysmission.org/links.html](http://www.maysmission.org/links.html) and a variety of helpful information on people with disabilities.

*This is an Equal Opportunity Program*



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# Making your Community Accessible

No two cities, towns or communities are alike. Each one is unique in its own particular way. Some are known as a thriving metropolis, some as tourist towns and others as sleepy, quiet communities.

No matter which description fits the area in which you live, vital areas of your community should be accessible to people with disabilities.



Everyone enjoys a romp in the park. Some like to shop the malls while others may enjoy strolling down the city streets, just gazing through the windows. Moms and dads go to the ballpark to watch their kids play ball and soccer. Don't forget election time, and the buildings that are designated as polling places.

Everything mentioned above, and more, needs to be accessible to people with disabilities. Whether the disability is mobility (using a wheelchair, walker, crutches, etc.), visual

impairment (blind, legally blind, etc.) or hearing impaired, cities, towns and municipalities should be concerned about being accessible to all. And, too, according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it's the law.

Title III of the ADA addresses public accommodations (hotels, motels, restaurants, theaters, museums, shopping places), basically, where a merchant desires the public to come and buy or view their goods or partake in the services offered. Title III also addresses commercial facilities which includes office buildings, factories and warehouses.

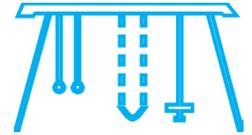
### *Making it Accessible*

- ❑ **Sidewalks:** need to be in good shape. Cracks, craters and ruts are a hazard to those who use wheelchairs, walkers and canes;
- ❑ **Ramps:** need to be built to code, 1 foot in length for every 1-inch rise. Ramps should also have a detectable scored or bubbled surface which alerts the visually impaired to a rise or fall;
- ❑ **Curb cuts:** at every intersection in each direction. Also wherever there is a pedestrian crossing;
- ❑ **Parking:** All merchants should provide

accessible parking but only 4 percent of the parking spaces are required to be accessible by the ADA;

❑ **Entrances:** should be 36 inches wide (wider would be easier and more practical for all);

❑ **Playgrounds and recreation areas:** should have firm areas close to playground equipment so that children in wheelchairs can easily mount and dismount;



❑ **Voting places:** should be accessible to those eligible to vote. Not only should they be ramped properly for the mobility impaired, but also provide services, such as readers or ballots in Braille for the visually impaired.

As with any laws or rules, they are useless unless they are enforced. Often, though, until the proper authority or official has been made aware, problems will go unresolved.

Consult people with disabilities in your community. It is almost guaranteed that they can tell you where inaccessibility issues lie. Make a list of the inaccessible areas and present them to the proper authorities. If the issue is with a merchant, present the owner or manager with your areas of concern.