

ADA Information

ADA Coordinator's Office
Orange County, Florida

Summary of Self Evaluation, January 26, 1992

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Federal Requirements of Accessibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), enacted on July 26, 1990, provides comprehensive rights and protections to individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, public accommodations, State and local government services, and telecommunications. The goal of the ADA is to assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency. The ADA prohibits all state and local governments and most private businesses from discriminating on the basis of disability.

The ADA provides a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

The Act is a historic, significant and far-reaching piece of Federal legislation that will have a tremendous impact on local government programs, services and facilities.

The ADA covers individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit a major life activity, persons with a record of such impairment, and persons regarded or perceived as having such impairment.

The Act is broken down into five sections:

Title I of the ADA prohibits employment discrimination against otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities

Title II of the ADA prohibits discrimination in services (including employment to the extent not already covered by Title I) provided by the state and local government entities.

Title III prohibits discrimination in places of public accommodation, commercial facilities, and transportation.

Title IV mandates that telecommunication devices be in place for the hearing impaired.

Title V miscellaneous provisions.

This report refers to the provisions specified in Title II of the ADA that apply to all services, activities and programs (aka SAP's) including employment, provided or made available by Orange County Government.

There are three major activities covered by Title II:

1. Those involving general public contact as part of the ongoing operations of the entity. Activities in this category include communication with the public (telephone contacts, office walk-ins, or interviews) and the public's use of the entities' facilities.
2. Those directly administered by the entities for program beneficiaries and participants. Activities in the second category include programs that provide State or local government services or benefits.
3. Employment.

Each entity was required to complete a self-evaluation of its current SAP as the first step toward ADA compliance, determining what services were accessible and those that required modifications to meet the needs of the disabled. The self-evaluation of facilities and SAPs was conducted in 1992. The self evaluation was kept on file for at least three years and was made available on request for public inspection.

Orange County, FL Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan

This report highlights the data collected in Orange County's self-evaluation particularly its physical structures and SAPs (services, activities and programs). In most cases, the County found that its SAPs are accessible or can readily be made accessible to persons with disabilities. All issues regarding structural barriers are addressed in an updated Transition Plan. In cases where structural barrier removal was necessary but not possible, alternative access to the specified program was provided.

The County provides training to employees on the requirements of the ADA through its Supervisors Leadership Program. Employees, supervisors, managers, and HR Coordinators are provided training on ADA requirements and the County's approach to compliance.

As required by the ADA, a grievance procedure has been developed. Policies and procedures to guide the County and its employees in providing SAPs is a continuing process.

For ease of review, this overview of the self-evaluation is divided into the following sections:

General Overview of County Operations

- Services of the County
- Employment
- Policies and Procedures
- Guidelines and Suggestions for Providing Services to Persons with Disabilities
- Grievance Procedure

Actual detailed survey forms are on file in the ADA Coordinator's office for review.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Orange County Government does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities.

In 1992, each Department Director was designated to coordinate compliance with the on-discrimination requirements contained in the Department of Justice regulations implementing Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including section 35.107. Information concerning the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the rights provided is available from the Office of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Civil Rights Division, US Department of Justice, Washington, DC 20035-6118 (202/514-0301 – voice) (202/514-0381 – TTY) or you may contact the County ADA Coordinator.

County Operations

Orange County Government has over 7,000 full and part-time employees providing services such as fire fighting, emergency rescue, law enforcement, inspections, planning, housing and economic development, water and sanitation services, recreation, events, classes, and public information dissemination.

The County provides high quality services to protect, preserve, and enhance the County for present and future generations. It is a high performing, inclusive government which partners with its community to create and preserve an environmentally safe and clean, quality of life.

In July 1990 President Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law. This Act made revolutionary changes in almost every segment of American life. The potential scope of the ADA is enormous when one considers the number of Americans who have disabilities.

The County, as a recipient of federal assistance, has continually strived to eliminate barriers that may prevent persons with disabilities from enjoying employment, access to facilities and services or other benefits.

In an effort to comply with the provisions of the ADA and to ensure that the operation of each County service, activity, and program is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, the County evaluated its facilities. This summary outlines changes required for program accessibility and continues to evaluate its services, policies and practices. The success of our efforts will require continued innovation, creativity, and the dedication of additional resources to ensure access to all of our citizens.

Common Services, Activities and Programs

A comprehensive self-evaluation was undertaken by the County for the purpose of reviewing and assessing County structures and its services, activities and programs for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each department identified the direct and indirect services it provided and was asked to determine if those services met or could be modified to meet the needs of the disabled. Responses were divided into three categories: Public Contact, Printed Materials, and Meetings. The purpose of the following information is to describe and define the groupings and categories.

Public Contact

Public contact is typically defined as one on one interaction between staff members and members of the general public. Public contact may take one or more of the following norms:

Telephone – Numerous phone calls are received on a daily basis requesting information on a wide range of topics. Additionally, the County provides special phone hotline services: 2-1-1, Community Services and 9-1-1- Emergency Assistance. Other examples are:

- Requests for information and assistance
- Registration for various programs or services
- Reporting abandoned vehicles, graffiti, or code violations
- Interviews with witnesses, victims, etc.

Counter/Walk-in Assistance – Many offices within the County receive “visitors” on a regular basis, as part of the day to day operation. Individuals who walk in to request information and a variety of types of services, include

- Applications for various licenses and permits
- Payment collection on bills or citations
- Document requests
- Services specific to a department
- Emergency assistance
- Employment applications

Tours/Entertainment & Events – The unique nature of some county operations lend themselves to visitation by residents and tourists seeking information on entertainment, parks and recreation and historic sites. A few examples are:

- History Museum
- Orange County Convention Center
- County Golf Course
- Tours of various facilities

Volunteers – The County uses volunteers to enhance many of its programs. Some volunteers work directly with the public in a variety of roles, such as:

- Staffing special events, fairs and celebrations
- Providing staff and/or program support to departments

Interviewing/Testing – Applicants for employment go through an interview process. Depending upon the type of work they perform, they may be asked to take additional skill tests. Other uses of interviewing and/or testing are:

- Witness, suspect and victim contacts
- Complaint investigations

Printed Materials

In addition to direct public contact, information regarding services, programs and activities is distributed through the use of printed materials. Although the initial contact may be by phone, a typical request could be for a brochure, report or application.

Applications – Many activities or service requests, which must comply with rules, regulations, or ordinances are processed through the use of applications. Applications are also required as the initial step of employment, registration for participation in programs and services offered by the County, and appointment to advisory boards. The format of the application varies based on the purpose. Some typical areas of use are:

- Obtaining a license or permit to build a structure, operate a business or reserve a facility for a special event or activity
- Applying for a staff, board or commission position
- Registering for programs or activities

Brochures/Fliers – These are used as informational and promotional tools to enhance participation. Brochures and fliers provide information to the public about workshops or community education programs or can be used to promote an upcoming special event. Examples are:

- Announcements regarding community meetings or event
- Information on fire safety, recycling, and water conservation
- Newsletters
- Educational or recreational programs

Billing – The means by which the County collects fees and other revenues for activities and/or services provided to the public, including the following:

- Utility bills
- Citations
- Licenses
- Class or activity registration

Noticing – provides legal notification to the public on municipal affairs. Examples are:

- Agendas and public notices for commissioners’ meetings, advisory board meetings, etc.
- Scheduled public meetings
- Official publications in local media

Document/Records/Staff Reports – These reflect the legal and historical records of the County. Examples are:

- Administrative staff reports
- Meeting minutes
- Contracts and agreements
- Ordinances and resolutions
- Budget or audit documents

Meetings

Meetings are a part of the daily operation. Some meetings are formal and noticed. Others are working sessions focusing on project management or internal operations. Some examples are:

Official Public Meetings

- Board of County Commissioner’s
- Zoning Board
- Boards and Commissions

Community Education/Awareness – Workshops and seminars are held for the public to increase awareness of resources in the community, include, but are not limited to:

- Staff training
- Safety and prevention presentations
- Citizens Academy
- Community forums and events

Inspections – In order to ensure public compliance with state and local ordinances, qualified staff from various departments conduct inspections. These may include:

- Code enforcement
- Fire prevention
- Occupancy
- Certification audits

Project meetings – meetings to review projects include:

- Pre-proposal/pre-construction meetings
- Walk-through's

Advisory/Focus Groups

- Task forces
- Numerous Advisory Boards

Visual Displays – materials used for informational, educational or training purposes, include but are not limited to:

- Bulletin boards
- Audio and video presentation materials

Classes and Workshops – Classes and workshops are conducted by many of the departments. At times outside providers are used to offer classes and workshops on the County's behalf. Examples include:

- Recreational classes and activities
- Training and educational classes
- Workshops and presentations

Services, Activities and Programs

There are two types: accessible and inaccessible which are defined below.

Accessible

Emergency Response – The Fire Department responds to fires, rescue, emergency medical aid, and hazardous material emergencies

Arrest of Suspects – The Sheriff's Offices respond to arrests and cite suspects.

Code Enforcement – offers a volunteer program that provides citizens and employees an opportunity to learn about its operations and what a code officer experiences during a work shift.

Securing Vendors/Contractors/Consultants – Through solicitation and the RFP process, staff advertises for, interviews and contracts with vendors, consultants and contractors for the procurement of material, supplies, design, or project development.

Inaccessible – circumstances where, because of safety concerns, required proficiency levels, and/or sanctioned requirements of law enforcement procedures---services, activities or programs will likely be inaccessible to some members of the community with disabilities. Others might be:

Recreation and Competitive Sports – A broad range of recreational activities are provided by the Parks Department. Most recreational activities or programs held in a class or clinic can be adapted to allow participation by persons with disabilities.

Where competitive leagues and tournaments are offered to the general public, the flexibility to be adaptive is impacted by safety concerns, proficiency requirements and/or

the rules of the sanctioning organization. In all cases, a review of each individual situation will occur in order to explore all possibilities and opportunities for participation.

Generally however,

Individuals needing assistive devices that may pose a hazard for the safe play of others might be denied participation. Decisions will be made on a case x case basis. Safety for both the participant and other players must be considered in all cases.

When an umbrella organization sanctions an event, the published rules of that organization will provide the framework for determining proficiency/skill levels of play, unless governing regulations allow rule modification.

Assistive devices will be provided to enable equal opportunity when it has been determined that safety, sanctioning rules and proficiency levels can be met.

The County will continue its efforts to provide services in the most integrated setting possible. Additionally, the ADA Coordinator and the Disability Advisory Board can provide a variety of information that specifically targets persons with disabilities. These programs are designed to enhance the quality of life for anyone who may require special accommodation due to developmental, emotional, medical or physical considerations.

Employment

The County's employment practices have been in compliance with the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and, therefore, significant changes are not necessary to comply with the ADA. The following actions will continue to be taken to meet new or expanded requirements.

- Continue to review employment rules and regulations to ensure that they do not discriminate against individuals with disabilities
- As recruitment occurs, physical or cognitive skills shall be reviewed to ensure that requirements related to performance of essential functions of the positions
- With the exception of positions covered by regulation, there are no automatic disqualifications for medical conditions. Each case is considered individually and reasonable accommodation is considered in all cases.
- Positions requiring a physical agility examination will be reviewed to ensure the job relatedness of all physical activities is simulated in the test
- Reasonable accommodations are available upon request for use in the selection/hiring process
- Employee training in sign language is being considered
- Job announcements should be available, upon request, in alternate formats
- A listing of the County and various TTY phone numbers shall be included on job announcements
- The EEO/ADA statement will be included on job fliers and employment applications

- Discriminating language is not allowed in job postings, applications or test material
- Orientations for interview panels shall include a discussion of non-discriminatory conduct for the interview selection process
- Outreach efforts shall include mailings to agencies servicing persons with disabilities

Policies and Procedures

Policies

One required element of the self-evaluation is a review of policies that affect accessibility to County services. The ADA requires that where policies are found to be discriminatory, appropriate modifications will be made.

A review was made of all existing policies. This review considered both official and informal policies. Some areas required policies to be created; others, policies needed to be modified.

The policies that follow reflect actions taken and are not recognized as basic in providing Services, Activities and Programs to all residents of our community and to job applicants and employees---

- It is the intent of the County to ensure that all individuals – employees, applicants and the public-at-large are knowledgeable of the requirements of ADA and are informed on the process and resources used by the City to make services, activities and programs accessible.
- The County will assure equal employment opportunity and fair employment practices through diversity to all persons regardless of race, color, ancestry, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, sexual orientation, medical condition or disability.
- Services, activities and programs will be offered in an accessible fashion. Requests for reasonable accommodation will be responded to positively where no proficiency, safety and/or sanctioned requirements are in place.
- Efforts will be taken to ensure that all public meetings are held in the Sunshine and are accessible. Notification of an accommodation is required per County Administrative Regulations.
- All material prepared for official public meetings is available upon request if needed in alternate format.
- Contracts made with entities that provide a service, activity or program to the public, on behalf of the County, should include a clause requiring

compliance by the contractor with all County policies concerning accessibility.

- Procedures to ensure compliance with the ADA and implementation of these policies will be developed and disseminated to appropriate staff.

Procedures

New employee orientation will include a section that covers disability policies concerning the ADA.

Training will be provided on disability awareness.

Notification to the public will occur through statements. On all public meeting agendas and announcements, the process for requesting auxiliary aids will be noted.

Upon request, assistive services and devices may be made available. Examples are: large print, documents on tape or in Braille, readers for individuals with visual impairments, amplification or listening devices, and interpreters. All agendas, fliers, display aids, and meeting announcements will contain the following:

“...In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), if any person with a disability as defined by the ADA needs special accommodation to participate in this proceeding, then not later than two business days prior to the proceeding, he or she should contact the Orange County Communications Division at 407/836-3111...”

In addition, phone listings in local directories will contain references to TTY lines. All information developed to alert individuals to 911 services will include reference to TTY access. Staff will be trained in the use of TTY equipment. Lastly, where counter heights are too high to be accessible, an alternate transaction area will be identified and/or lapboards or clipboards provided as an assistive device.

Disability Guidelines

The following guidelines and suggestions are provided in a manner that will create awareness and provide training. The first organizes suggestions for assisting with accessibility by Service, Activity or Program type and the second provides general disability type. These are suggestions that will help departments understand and plan for the needs of persons with disabilities.

For the purpose of this document, four broad impairment categories are identified. They are: visually impaired (VI), hard of hearing or hearing impaired (HI), mobility impaired (MI), and learning impaired (LI). It needs to be mentioned that some individuals may have more than one disability. The vast majority of persons with disabilities can receive and/or participate in the same services/activities/programs as individuals who do not have disabilities.

Definitions

Visually Impaired (VI). A person is considered legally blind if their visual acuity is 20/200 or less in the better eye with the best correction. A person who is legally blind may have some useful vision. Many people with severe vision problems can enjoy many of the same activities the sighted enjoy if someone will offer guidance and orientation to the surroundings.

Hearing Impaired (HI). Total or partial impairment of hearing may result from a variety of causes, the onset being either at birth or occurring later in life. Impairments vary from mild to severe. A person with a hearing impairment may use a hearing aid to increase his/her hearing capabilities, or read lips or sign to communicate. A person with a hearing impairment may also have some difficulty with speech.

Mobility Impairment (MI). A person's mobility may be limited as a result of a traumatic accident, birth defects or aging. Weakness may range from involvement of one arm or leg to involvement of all extremities and trunk. A person may use a wheelchair, walker, scooter, prosthetic limb, cane or crutches to assist mobility.

Learning Impairment (LI). Ability to learn may be hampered by a traumatic accident or birth defect resulting in brain damage. Learning impairments vary from mild to severe. A person may have speech or communication problems in addition to cognitive and memory problems. New material to be learned may need to be adapted according to a person's limitations.

Suggestions based on Disability: Organized by Service, Activity, and/or Program

Public Contact

- When talking on the phone, speak slowly and clearly to allow the person enough time to respond to you (**learning disability, LI**).
- Use the Relay Service (711) or TTY (**Hearing Impaired, HI**)
- When interacting with a person one on one, speak clearly and face the person with whom you are speaking (**hearing impaired, HI**)
- Communicate with pencil and paper (**hearing impaired, HI**)
- If a public counter height is above 34" in your office, find an alternate meeting spot; i.e., a lower table, a lower bench, or pull up a chair and sit next to the person at eye level (**mobility impairment, MI**)
- Provide assistance in filing out an application (**vision impairment, VI/learning impairment, LI**)
- Have staff available to answer questions either over the phone or at the counter (**ALL impairments**)
- Rearrange office furniture to accommodate wheelchairs in the office, or use an alternate location (**mobility impairment, MI**)
- Take extra time to explain things one on one (**LI**)
- Use repetition, especially with verbal information (**LI**)

- Simplify instructions (both written and verbal) **(LI)**
- Make a flier with commonly asked questions and answers **(HI)**
- Interview by phone if individuals cannot come to you **(ALL)**
- Train employees and volunteers to recognize disabilities and to make appropriate accommodations **(ALL)**
- In testing situations or interviews, present the information to an applicant in written form **(HI)**
- Provide alternate ways to do staff testing based on the person's limitations **(ALL)**
- Hire a reader or get a qualified volunteer to assist on visits away from work environment **(ALL)**
- Always use accessible vehicles for excursions as needed **(MI)**

Printed Materials

- Increase type size of handouts, applications, citations, bills, violation reports, etc. (No need for extra cost, simply enlarge on a copier and use 14-16 pt type) **(VI)**
- Mail printed information to individuals requesting information from an inaccessible facility or to individuals who have problems with transportation **(MI)**

Meetings/Training/Activities

- Wheelchair clearance under a table is 27"
- Assist with the opening of doors to buildings and meeting rooms **(VI, MI)**
- Know the group to which you are presenting. Call ahead and find out if anyone in your audience has special needs and plan accordingly **(ALL)**
- Use clear and descriptive audiovisual materials during presentations **(ALL)**
- Make all signs in large print **(VI)**
- Use a PA system if possible when making presentations **(HI)**
- Staff, volunteers and family can assist participants during activities **(ALL)**
- Pair a person with impairment with a non-impaired person to assist in participation in training session or class **(ALL)**
- Increase the lighting where the staff and participants are working **(VI)**
- Provide auxiliary assistance with interpreters, written material, and assistive listening devices during meetings, classes and workshops **(HI)**
- Call people with reminders of meetings instead of mailing fliers **(VI)**
- Use tactile teaching at workshops and educational presentations **(VI, LI)**
- Make learning situations "fun" because it promotes motivational learning **(LI)**
- Provide success-oriented activities **(LI)**

Suggestions by Type of Disability

All Impairments

- Keep in mind that a person who has a disability is a "person" just like anyone else.
- If you don't know what to say or do, allow the person who has a disability to help put you at ease.
- Offer assistance if asked or if a need seems obvious, but don't insist.

- Be considerate of the extra time it may take for a person to get things said or done.
- Speak directly to a person who has a disability. Don't consider a companion to be a conversational go-between.
- If the facility in which you offer services, activities or programs is not accessible, or an individual has difficulty with transportation, consider a home visit, interview by phone, arrange a meeting in an accessible facility or mail printed information.
- Ensure that goods, services, privileges, advantages, accommodations and services, are provided to an individual with a disability in the "most" integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the individual.

Note: Accommodations for one individual may not be the same or desirable for another individual with similar disability(ies).

Visual Impairment

- Provide assistance to individuals who may need help with reading information or filling out an application
- Make all signage large print, provide contrasting color, and use simple color like black on white

Hearing Impairment

- When testing or interviewing, present information to the applicant in written form, or use an interpreter, if appropriate.
- If required, communicate by exchanging notes.
- If a person lip-reads, position them in a place where they can see the speaker

Mobility Impairment

- Provide accessible vehicles for activities when needed to provide transportation
- Rearrange office furniture or conference rooms to accommodate wheelchairs

Learning Impairment

- One on one communication is ideal for learning.
- When talking on the phone, speak slowly and clearly. Allow the person enough time to comprehend and respond to you.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures (general guidelines)

All buildings that are open to the public must be prepared to provide safe exit of all occupants and visitors in an emergency situation. Under ADA Section 504 listing the requirements for program accessibility, emergency procedures must also make equal provision for the safety and evacuation of disabled persons.

The following information may be used as a guide to assist staff when responding to emergencies and providing assistance to persons with disabilities. It is recommended that all staff members be expected to familiarize themselves with emergency procedures.

In emergency evacuation situations, persons with disabilities must be assisted according to the extent of their disability and the nature of the emergency, NEVER LEAVE A DISABLED PERSON ALONE IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION.

Visually Impaired

- Describe the nature of the emergency
- Offer to guide them and inquire whether they might prefer taking your elbow. Lead them to a safe area. Advise them of any obstacles. Most visually impaired persons are familiar with the immediate area and can be independent once a safe area is reached.
- Do not take the cane or dog away.

Hearing Impaired

- Persons with hearing impairments may not hear the warning bells and buzzers used for evacuation of a building
- Usually they will sense the emergency situation by noting the actions of other people in a room or building. If necessary, write down the nature of the emergency and direct them to the nearest evacuation route.

Persons Using Canes, Crutches, Walkers

- Before moving a semi-ambulatory person, discuss and agree upon a procedure
- Usually they can be lifted without complications or compromising their well being
- They may be lifted using a 2-man lock-arm carry or can be transferred to an office-type chair (preferably with arms) and carried down stairs by two persons
- Use building “evacu-chair” if available
- Have an extra wheelchair in a downstairs office to use if the individual has used a cane, crutches or walker down the stairs for assistance

Persons that Use Wheelchairs

- Do not remove a person from a wheelchair unless the occupant agrees to such a procedure.
- The requirements for persons in wheelchairs vary considerably with the type of disability and individual preference
- Some persons can tolerate only minimal movement. Lifting them from their wheelchair may result in severe pain or injury. Removal from the chair may induce spasticity or result in loss of use of an artificial respirator on the chair. Some occupants may be connected to a catheter bag.
- Some electric/motorized wheelchairs with batteries weigh in excess of 400 lbs.
- The batteries are usually the sealed type and the cables are connected to terminals with wing nuts for easy removal.
- Remove the batteries before attempting to carry the electric chair down a flight of stairs either with or without the occupant in the chair. The batteries can be carried safely.

- It may be possible to lift a light weight model chair that is unoccupied with the batteries attached but be sure the batteries are not tilted or bounced.
- If the wheelchair occupant uses a respirator, the batteries must be reinstalled as soon as possible. It may be necessary to wait for a portable respirator to be used while the occupant is disconnected from his battery operated system before moving the occupant from the emergency situation.
- Wheelchairs have moveable or weak parts, which are not constructed to withstand the stress of lifting. Follow instructions from the chair's occupant.
- If it is necessary to carry a chair downstairs with an occupant, at least four people are needed.
- Strap the occupant in the wheelchair before lifting. It may be necessary to improvise and use belts or neckties to secure the occupant in the chair.