



## Information About *The ADA and Businesses*

### **What is the ADA?**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law that gives people with disabilities equal rights to work, receive government services, and go to public places and businesses.

### **What does the ADA have to do with businesses?**

Under the ADA, private businesses that sell goods or services to the public are called “public accommodations.” The ADA says that public accommodations must be accessible to people with disabilities. This means that people with disabilities have to be able to enter your business and buy your goods and services.

### **What Does My Business Have to Do?**

The United States Department of Justice has adopted the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). ADAAG lists the characteristics a business must have to be accessible to people with disabilities. All of the ADAAG requirements can be found at <http://www.access-board.gov/adaag/html/adaag.htm>. ADAAG is very specific—it will tell you how high, wide, or long things in your business must be. Below are some basic ADAAG requirements. However, you should review ADAAG to make sure that your business is accessible.

- If you have parking for your customers, you must make sure you have reserved parking for people with disabilities. You must have at least one accessible parking space no matter how small your parking lot is and must add an additional accessible parking space for every 25 parking spaces you have. Accessible parking spaces should usually be the closest to your entrance, be at least 96 inches (8 feet) wide, have a 96 inch access aisle, and should be reserved by a sign.
- The route from the parking lot to your entrance should be stable, firm, and level. If the pathway leads over a curb or step, you should put in a ramp. Ramps should be one foot long for every inch high they go.
- Your entrance should be wide enough for a person using a wheelchair to get through. This usually means it must be at least 32 inches wide. Your door should have a handle that can be opened with one hand without having to twist or pinch, like a handle or lever.
- You should make sure that people with disabilities can move through your business and access your products. This may require you to move temporary displays, lower shelf space, and widen aisles.
- If your business has a restroom, people with disabilities must be able to use it. This may require widening the restroom stalls, putting in grab bars, and lowering the soap and towel dispensers.

## **Does ADAAG Apply to All Businesses?**

Yes. If your building was built or altered after 1992, you must make sure you meet all ADAAG requirements. If your building was built before that, you must meet all ADAAG requirements that are “readily achievable”—able to be done without too much effort or expense. Whether something is “readily achievable” depends on its costs and your businesses’ resources. Meeting the ADAAG requirements is an ongoing requirement. For example, if installing a ramp is not “readily achievable” today, it may be tomorrow or at some point in the future when your business has earned more money.

## **Resources**

For information about American Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines:

United States Access Board

Phone (voice): (202) 272-0080 toll free: (800) 872-2253

Phone (TTY): (202) 272-0082 toll free: (800) 993-2822

Fax: (202) 272-0081

Website: [www.access-board.gov](http://www.access-board.gov)

E-mail: [info@access-board.gov](mailto:info@access-board.gov)

For information and technical assistance on the American Disabilities Act:

U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division

Disability Rights Section - NYA

Phone (voice): 800-514-0301

Phone (TTY): 800-514-0383

Fax: (202) 307-1198

Website: [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)

For technical assistance contact the region Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center:

DBTAC – Mid-Atlantic ADA Center

TransCen, Inc. Phone: (301) 217-0124 (V/TTY)

Fax: (301) 217-0754

E-mail: [adainfo@transcen.org](mailto:adainfo@transcen.org)

Web site: [www.adainfo.org](http://www.adainfo.org)

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