

Conclusions and Recommendations/Actions: 2010

The information in this report has been carefully gathered and analyzed; it accurately represents current compliance in the City as a whole. After evaluating all the city departments, the ADA Office assembled a list of needs and recommendations. The results are as follows:



Need:

Ensuring that the Notice of Compliance Poster is on display in all public lobbies is an ongoing imperative. It is the general practice that most departments have not framed their posters. Therefore, replacement of posters is vital and follow up reminders at the annual On Site ADA Visits is essential.

Recommendation/Actions:

Continue following up at the annual On Site Visits with Departmental ADA Coordinators to ensure that good quality posters are always on display in all public lobbies. Make available and/or deliver posters as needed. This system appears to be working; the office regularly gets requests for posters. This year we provided new posters to Parks and Recreation Department, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development, EMS, Small Minority Business Resources Department, Austin Police Department, Austin Water Utility and City Clerk's Office.



Need:

There was continued coordination of the Sidewalk and Curb Ramp Program in the Public Works Department with City of Austin staff and community members. ADAPT and AMCPD lead the community in working with staff in furthering this effort. This partnership has resulted in a very productive and successful collaboration.

Recommendation/Actions:

The ADA Access and Sidewalk Task Force (the ADA Task Force) continues to work effectively, although not meeting officially this year. Along-side city staff, the citizen representative group members have assisted in prioritizing projects.

Additionally, some individual Task Force members continue to meet staff at site locations to get input and recommendations on specific projects. The Task Force partnership with staff has proven to be a very useful tool. There is also a recent stated need for the Task Force to start meeting on a regular basis; this will occur in the coming year. Current and past participants include members of AMCPD, ADAPT, Capital Metro, Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services DARS- Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center, Austin Energy, Watershed Protection, Development and Review, Travis County, Texas Department of Transportation, Public Works & Transportation, and several interested citizens of the community at large.



Need:

Training is ongoing. ADA tude awareness training for all city employees continues to be a strong need. All classes are well attended and offer positive evaluations. Also, departments continue to schedule individual training sessions for their staff such as the Austin Water Utility, Austin Convention Center Department, Purchasing Department and the Austin Police Department. The revamped Jeopardy Game continues to be very popular and attendance reflects this. This year we received some external training requests from the U S Department of Veterans Affairs and UT Division of Housing and Food Services Wellness Program. **(For complete information, see attachment- Training Log)**

The ADA Employment Training is nearly finished based the popular “Who wants to be a millionaire” game show. The practice case scenarios component of the training is the final piece.

Last year, we developed a display presentation and successfully used it for exhibits, but also at training sessions marketing upcoming sessions and an accompanying Power Point detailing the services and activities of the ADA Office. A regular annual event where we use the presentation display is at the Solid Waste Services Education Fair.

Recommendation/Actions:

The majority of ADA tude trainings have been met with requests for individual departments. Staff is finalizing a similar revamp of Title I - Employment training in the game show style. The office will conduct a pilot with veteran Departmental ADA Coordinators, develop a media plan to advertise this new training to all departments, encouraging participation for supervisors, managers and interested employees.



Need:

Last year, in response to customer evaluations and requests, City ADA Coordinator in partnership with VSA Arts of Texas converted trainings for Arts Contractors into an online course with accompanying quiz. We used the course developed by the U S Dept of Justice and we created the quiz with relevant case scenarios. It is required that all Arts Contractors attend an annual training for every year they receive funding from the City and to submit an annual ADA Assessment. This year the training was successfully conducted electronically. Many contractors commented positively about this change, how much better this worked for them while still learning useful information.

Recommendations/Actions:

ADA Trainings will continue to be a regular component of the Arts Contractor Application Process. We have used the online training for two years and are considering a regular training for this coming year. Staff has recently met with staff from VSA Texas and will be working together on the new training. The

assessment will continue to be required by all contractors to be on file, as a requirement for their ADA Narrative element of their contract. The Arts Contractor tracking is a system that ensures all contractors are complying with their assessment and training obligations. Letters are sent to non-participating contractors.



Need:

Over the past several years, it has become clear and necessary to address the issue of a City of Austin Disability Handbook. The handbook will address such issues as service animals, Sign Language Interpreters; outstanding issues relating to reasonable accommodations, particularly how the accommodation gets expensed. Other areas include accessible parking, adaptive technology and maybe a “frequently asked questions” section.

Recommendation/Actions:

It has been a difficult process to comply with this goal due to the magnitude of the entire project, limited staff and the inability to dedicate the necessary time. Over this past year, individual policies relating to service animals, Sign Language Interpreters and accessible parking were drafted. They have been submitted to one of the City Attorneys for a preliminary approval. It is also planned to unveil the policies to a group of veteran departmental ADA Coordinators to get their ideas and recommendations. The approved policies can later be compiled into the City of Austin Disability Handbook.



Summary

This report identifies positive actions taken by the City. Compliance is an ongoing process. The City continues to offer consultation to cities, counties and state agencies on their current progress of ADA implementation. Even though there is still work ahead, the City of Austin has an enviable record of compliance, in large part, due to the support of upper management including Mayor and Council, City Manager, Executive Team and the Director of Human Resources.

The City should continue proactively including individuals with disabilities in the planning process to utilize its limited resources to yield the maximum level of accessibility. Citizen request programs, advisory committees, and citizen led taskforces are an effective means of gathering this information.

When readily achievable and fiscally responsible, the City should exceed the minimum standards of accessibility to allow greater opportunities for Austin citizens with disabilities to participate in the economic and social life of their community.¹

The City ADA Office works to make Austin the most livable city in the nation for all its citizens through proactive programs to implement the ADA and increase

community-wide inclusion. The City of Austin has demonstrated state and national leadership in its accessibility practices through innovative policy initiatives that remove barriers to inclusion for individuals with disabilities. This entire document serves only as an information piece and is not intended to reflect the legal opinion or position of the City of Austin with regards to ADA. For legal issues, consult with your legal advisor.

Please visit us at:

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/ada/>

CITY OF AUSTIN ADA/504 DIVISION -DEPARTMENT OF CORPORATE HUMAN RESOURCES

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