

CITY OF AUSTIN ADA OFFICE



2010 ADA IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

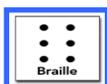




Table of Contents

City of Austin FY 2009-2010 ADA Implementation Report

Introduction	Page#
ADA History	2
Duties and Responsibilities	3-4
Onsites and Ongoing Development	4-5
Observing 20 Years of the ADA	5-7
FY 2009-2010 Departmental Evaluations/	7-8
Departmental Submissions FY 2009-2010	
Health and Human Services Department	8
Austin Convention Center Department	9
Library Department	10
Neighborhood Housing and Community Development	11-12
Parks and Recreation Department	13
Public Works Department	14-17
AMCPD FY 2009-2010	
Introduction	18
Awards and Employment Committee Accomplishments	19-20
Access and Youth Accomplishments	21
Conclusion, Recommendation Summary	22-25
Attachments FY 2009-2010	
Budget	26
Training Log	27
Sign Language Interpreting Services	28
Service Engagement Tracking	29
Volunteer Parking Enforcement Program	30



2010 City of Austin ADA Implementation

Introduction



In 1973, Congress provided protection for people with disabilities through its enactment of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Although other pieces of legislation were enacted between 1973 and 1990, it was not until 1990 that Congress took a step forward and enacted legislation prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities.



On July 26, 2010 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) celebrated the 20th Anniversary of its signing. The ADA, the most sweeping piece of civil rights legislation, is an extensive law, which affects every aspect of life for over 54 million Americans by ensuring equal opportunity in the areas of employment, state and local government services, public accommodations and telecommunications. Although the ADA was signed into law in 1990, it did not become effective until January 26, 1992. At this time, state and local governments were required to insure non-discrimination on the basis of disability in all public programs, services and activities. This grace period allowed these entities to assemble the necessary staff and develop a plan for its full implementation. The City of Austin, however, saw this as a priority and initiated implementation of its compliance program in 1991, before the mandated date set for local governments. In January of 2010, the City entered its nineteenth year of implementation under the ADA.

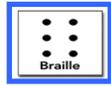
Briefly, the ADA offers protections, under five separate titles or sections, which covers various areas. The five areas are: Employment, Public Services, Public Accommodations, Telecommunications and a miscellaneous title, which prohibits threatening or coercing people with disabilities or those who associate with them. The law outlines the following definition for protection. A person must meet at least one of the following tests: 1) he/ she is substantially impaired with respect to one or more major life activities; 2) he/ she has a record of such an impairment; and 3) he/ she is regarded as having such an impairment.



President George H. Bush signing the ADA on July 26, 1990.



President Barack Obama talks with members of Congress and advocates on the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act on Sept. 26, 2010, in the Oval Office.



City of Austin ADA Office

Since the signing of the ADA, the purpose of the ADA Coordinator's Office has been to facilitate the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act within the City of Austin as an organization. The ADA affects many areas including: physical and programmatic public services, employment issues, communication, dispute resolution and accountability.

Although the appointment of the City-wide ADA Coordinator was a requirement of the ADA, the City committed to complying with the legislation, required each department designate an ADA Departmental Coordinator. In fact, some of the larger departments have designated additional representatives, who as a team, address employment issues, facility issues, and coordinate the dissemination of information in alternative formats. Together with the City-wide ADA Coordinator, this network of ADA departmental coordinators has helped to efficiently expedite the implementation of the ADA in the City of Austin.



From Left to Right
City of Austin ADA/504
Coordinator
Dolores Gonzalez

City of Austin ADA/504
Assistant Coordinator
Lee Nguyen

Duties and Responsibilities

To help facilitate communication and discussion, the ADA Office invites and encourages ADA Department Coordinators to attend training sessions and events sponsored by this office and the Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities. As a result of these efforts, the ADA Office has created more friendly approaches to assist Departmental ADA Coordinators. Another component of compliance is to visit all departments on an annual basis and go over a survey tool that identifies ADA requirements and provides guidance on City processes for complying. On-site visits produce information that is valuable to the City and to the department, as they provide a standard for comparison and a foundation for analysis.



The most important responsibility for the City-wide ADA Coordinator is to monitor effective compliance with the law. Compliance is required, not only in the area of physical accessibility, but also in the services the City provides and the programs



it administers. Without the current network of staff, monitoring the compliance in their respective departments, an accurate assessment would not be possible. In addition to working with the network of ADA coordinators, the ADA Office staff also serve as the liaisons to the Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities, provide the City of Austin with a wide-range of training and awareness workshops, provide consultations on ADA compliance issues and reasonable accommodations and offer a variety of print, reference and video resources on the ADA. This year the ADA Office conducted nine trainings and disability awareness sessions. The City ADA Coordinator also represents the City of Austin in all media related situations as needed, including radio, TV and print. This year Ms. Gonzalez was invited to present at the National ADA Symposium hosted by DBTAC in Denver, CO June 21-23, 2010. Dolores assisted trainers in planning and also co-trained a 2.5 day interactive session for ADA Coordinators; the presentation encompassed the ADA requirements of the Self Evaluation and Transition Plan.

On-site Visits



As part of the City-wide effort to ensure ADA Compliance and obtain a more complete analysis of implementation, the ADA Office conducts annual on-site visits with each department. This on-site visit provides the department coordinator with an opportunity to discuss ADA requirements, implementation issues and training needs. It is also an opportunity to discuss new resources, such as the newly resurfaced ADA Roundtable. The ADA Roundtable is a formatted meeting specifically for ADA Coordinators, bringing topics of interest on a semi-monthly basis, in addition to facilitating networking with area ADA Coordinators. In order to formalize the visit, a survey tool was developed and the results are submitted in summary form to the coordinator and kept on file. Upon request, the survey assessment tool is shared with the Departmental ADA Coordinator ahead of the meeting time. Additionally, the Departmental ADA Coordinator may choose to invite other pertinent staff, thereby ensuring that more than one person is aware of their department's ADA responsibilities. This year the ADA Office conducted **23** On-site Visits.

Ongoing Developments



Lee Nguyen, Assistant ADA Coordinator continues to assist the City-wide ADA coordinator in various duties enhancing productivity in the office. These are the current activities that he was been involved in:

- Lee Nguyen provided graphics and logistical assistance for the 20th Anniversary of the ADA celebration done in partner with DARS, the rehabilitative state agency.
- Continued enhancements were made to both the ADA PowerPoint interactive games, providing more visual appeal to customers; personalized touches were made for trainings outside the city. The interactive PowerPoint game

allows trainees to actively interact; the result has been a **94.5%** exceptional participant evaluation score.

- Having been certified by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation at their Texas Accessibility Academy, Lee Nguyen has continued to gain experience in providing accessibility assessments to City departments. Several assessments were conducted in FY 2009-2010 for Parks and Recreation Department, Austin Convention Center and Austin Public Library.

Observing 20 Years of the ADA

July 2010 marked the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A group of local advocates, called **Austin ADA Trailblazers** gathered July 12 in a special celebration of this landmark legislation. The assembled panel shared their stories about life before and after the ADA.

Austin ADA Trailblazers Celebrate ADA Anniversary

Among the panelists, who observed the 20th anniversary of the ADA, was **Bob Kafka**, a New York native born in 1946, who has worked for decades to improve the lives of those with disabilities. His achievements are extensive, including serving as Director of Handicapped Student Services at the University of Houston, involvement with the Coalition for Barrier Free Living, co-founding a wheelchair athletic association, and creating an independent living camp for kids with disabilities. Bob was also one of the national organizers of ADAPT, which was instrumental in shepherding the **We Will Ride** victory for lifts on buses and the passage of the ADA. He is currently working to implement the Supreme Court's Olmstead decision, which confirms the ADA mandate of integration of people with disabilities in the community.

Another local trailblazer is **Stephanie Thomas**, a national organizer for ADAPT, a grassroots civil rights organization for people with disabilities. Stephanie served as Executive Director of the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities. She has worked at a number of centers for independent living including, the Austin Resource Center for Independent Living and the El Paso Opportunity Center for the Handicapped. Stephanie is currently the president and co founder of Accessible Housing Austin AHA! and continues her work with ADAPT of Texas focusing on passing the Community Choice Act, this amends the Social Security Act to provide individuals with disabilities and older Americans with equal access to community-based attendant services and supports.

It is worth noting that this year, during their Awards and Recognition Program held October 27, 2010, the Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities recognized Bob and Stephanie with a lifetime achievement award for their outstanding work in advocating for persons with disabilities.

City ADA Coordinator Notes Changes

City ADA Coordinator, **Dolores Gonzalez** stated, "The Americans with Disabilities Act has certainly changed my life," as she is the only person to serve in this position. Having served under seven mayors and five city managers, Dolores says "there has never been a decline in support." She adds "the law is only a blueprint of what needs to be done; the rest is about common sense and commitment."

Dolores recounts a story in which a citizen requested an automatic door at a leased library facility. Although it was not required to do so, the City made the accommodation, which led to a practice of installing automatic sensor doors at all newly constructed libraries. Solid Waste Services initiated a program whereby a citizen with a disability, who could not put the trash bins at the curb, could be accommodated. A citizen, who was blind, called for assistance; he stated that he could take his bins to the curb, but wanted to be accommodated in that the bins were always left in the same place so he could retrieve them. It was a simple accommodation, but it was very significant for him.

These are just two examples of how the City has changed policies and practices to improve accessibility for citizens with disabilities. Dolores closed the panel celebration by saying, "things have not always gone smoothly, but in the end, I was always told "how do we make this right?"

This panel was a clear example of the community observing the 20th anniversary together, by keeping the Spirit of ADA alive in the City of Austin.

FY 2009-2010 Departmental Evaluations



The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) called for the designation of a City-wide ADA Coordinator. The City of Austin, committed to compliance with this legislation, designated departmental coordinators, in addition to the mandated City-wide Coordinator. Together with the City-wide ADA Coordinator, the ADA department coordinators work to ensure the City complies with the legislation in the programs it administers and the services it provides.

Monitoring, a chief component of the compliance effort, has been, and continues to be a challenge. Complying with the law required each local entity to produce a transition plan and conduct periodic self-evaluations. Briefly, the transition plan identifies structural changes needed to provide equal access to programs. The self-evaluation is meant to provide a review of a covered entity's programs, services, facilities, policies and aid in identifying potential areas for discrimination.



The City's strategy was to produce a self-evaluation and transition plan for each department. Periodically, each department is required to complete self-evaluation forms. These forms are independent of the annual on-site visits conducted by the ADA Office. Together these documents provide the City and the individual

departments with information that aids in, not only improving access in their respective departments, but also the City program as a whole. Individual departments recording submissions this year include:



Austin / Travis County
Health and Human Services Department

