Americans with Disabilities Act: Starting the Conversation with Business

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It all started with a Research Project

Syracuse University & Southeast ADA Center
Participatory Action Research (PAR) Project

• Research teams in 6 states visited 12 communities to survey a total of 60 Title II local government entities.

• Research Question: Are communities more accessible as a result of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the efforts of Project Civic Access?
Participatory Action Research

• People with disabilities were involved in planning and conducting the research.

• Research Teams included people with and without disabilities.

• Each team visited 4 local government entities and documented their first-hand experiences with accessibility.
Why not use a similar approach to gather information to start a conversation with business?
Americans with Disabilities Act: Starting the Conversation with Business

A GUIDE that customers with disabilities can use to give feedback to a business about its accessibility.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Starting the Conversation with Business

You do NOT need to be ADA expert to use this GUIDE?

Participants will learn:
• How to find answers to ADA questions, and
• How to share this information with a business.
Step 1: Form a Team

Who should be on a Team:

- Team members can represent people with different types of disabilities or all the same type of disability.
Step 2: Make your Team Activity Plan

- Team will select a business they want to visit.
- Team will select 1 or 2 activities that they will do while visiting a business.
Step 3: Complete Your Survey

A Survey Worksheet is provided in the GUIDE with 10 questions addressing:

• Accommodations
• Helpful accessible features
• Communication with staff
• Problems or barriers
Step 4: Gather your results

Meet with your Team & record your results:

• Select 1 or 2 barriers that your team wants to share with the business

• Identify helpful accessible features and good things that the business is doing
Step 5: Get ADA Information

Find the most current and accurate ADA information, by:

- Identifying specific ADA information in writing from federally approved ADA publications
- Contact an ADA expert to double-check your findings (Southeast ADA Center)
Step 6: Share your Results

- Use *Sample “Report to Business Template”* to write up the report that you will share with the business.

- Share report & ADA publications with the business you visited
Step 7: Follow up

- Go back to the place you visited to find out what changes they made
- Provide more information and resources, if needed
Alliance of Disability Advocates

**Activity:** Go to library & check out a book.

**Outcomes:** Library conducted Staff Training, and purchased / installed Screen reader software.
Power of the Dream Self Advocates

**Activity:** Visit favorite thrift store & buy an item.

**Outcomes:** Store made improvements to accessible parking & created new policy on service animals
Real Advocates Now Emerging

**Activity:** Visit a Fast Food Restaurant & order meal

**Outcome:** Restaurant adjusted tension on heavy restroom doors so they were easier to open.
People First NC

Activity: Measure tension needed to open heavy restroom doors and share results with business.

Outcomes: 11 businesses improved restroom doors and asked for more feedback.
What We Learned

• Advocates learn how to find and share accurate ADA information

• Businesses are asking for more ADA information

• Businesses are making their programs and services more accessible.
For More Information

ADA: Starting the Conversation with Business

Southeast ADA Center

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