



Accessibility and the ADA

Explore rights and responsibilities under the ADA, accessibility resources, and ongoing barriers to access.

Conversation Questions

1. What does accessibility mean to you?
2. Have you encountered any barriers to access in the Skokie community? What accommodations could be made to address these barriers?
3. How has COVID-19 changed how we approach accessibility and accommodations?
4. What other legal and social protections should be in place for disabled people?

Key Definitions

- **Accessibility** - When the needs of people with disabilities are specifically considered, and products, services, and facilities are built or modified so that they can be used by people of all abilities ([from the CDC](#))
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** - Signed into law on July 26, 1990, the ADA is a wide-ranging civil rights law that prohibits, under certain circumstances, discrimination based on disability. It affords similar protections against discrimination to Americans with disabilities as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made discrimination based on race, religion, sex, national origin, and other characteristics illegal ([from ADA National Network](#))
- **Individual with a disability** - A person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual or a record of such an impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment ([from ADA National Network](#))
- **Reasonable Accommodation** - Any change to the application or hiring process, to the job, to the way the job is done, or the work environment that allows a person with a disability who is qualified for the job to perform the essential functions of that job and enjoy equal employment opportunities. Accommodations are considered “reasonable” if they do not create an undue hardship or a direct threat ([from ADA National Network](#))



The CIVIC LAB at Skokie Public Library offers information and thought-provoking activities to support dialogue and engagement on issues that affect our community.



Listen

“Episode 92: Disability History in the United States” from *15 Minute History*

<https://bit.ly/3ePGjbm>

This podcast episode gives a brief history of attitudes towards disability in the United States.

“A.D.A. Now!” from *Throughline*

<https://n.pr/2V6bF6O>

This episode of NPR's *Throughline* covers the history of the disability rights movement.

“Disability Pride: The High Expectations of a New Generation” by Joseph Shapiro for *New York Times*

<https://nyti.ms/3eNCuDA>

This article, available as text or audio, covers the goals of disability rights advocates who have grown up with the ADA.

“Workers With Disabilities Can Earn Just \$3.34 An Hour. Agency Says Law Needs Change” by Alina Selyukh for NPR

<https://n.pr/3BAKmlF>

This short article, available as text or audio, discusses the ongoing issue of subminimum wage for disabled workers.

Read

“The 30th Mark - A Look at the History of the Americans with Disabilities Act” from the National Center for Learning Disabilities

<https://www.nclld.org/news/ada-30/>

Explore an interactive timeline of the history of the ADA.

“Top ADA Frequently Asked Questions” from the ADA National Network

<https://bit.ly/3y13KpX>

See some of the most common questions and answers about the ADA.





“It’s Time To Revisit Our ADA To-Do Lists” by Andrew Pulrang for *Forbes*

<https://bit.ly/3kLTLRu>

This article challenges businesses to re-evaluate their ADA compliance using simple questions and everyday examples rather than legal jargon.

“30 Years After a Landmark Disability Law, the Fight for Access and Equality Continues” by Abigail Abrams for *TIME*

<https://bit.ly/36UOLnq>

This article discusses the ongoing fight for disability rights.

“Demise of Walmart ‘greeters’ reveals shortcomings in the Americans with Disabilities Act” by Stacy Hickox for *The Conversation*

<https://bit.ly/36ZmBpg>

This article uses changes in employee expectations at Walmart as a case study of some real-world limitations of work-place protections for workers with disabilities.

Watch

“ADA History - In Their Own Words” from *ADA 2021*

<https://bit.ly/3rzrmzA>

The Association for Community Living shares several interviews with some of the people involved in the creation of the ADA.

“ADA 30 In Color” from the Disability Visibility Project

<https://bit.ly/3iDJeFq>

A panel of disabled BIPOC discusses the past, present, and future of disability rights for people of color and the intersection of race and disability.

