
Mayor's Office on Disability



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Know Your Rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act!

What is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?

The ADA is a civil rights law that protects people with different types of disabilities from discrimination in all aspects of social life. More specifically, Title II of the ADA requires that all programs offered through the state and local government such as the City and County of San Francisco must be accessible and usable to people with disabilities.

Who is protected under the ADA?

The ADA protects individuals with various kinds of disabilities.

What are my rights under the ADA?

The ADA and City policy require that people with disabilities have equal access to all City services, activities, and benefits. In other words, people with disabilities must have an equal opportunity to participate in the programs and services offered through the City and County of San Francisco. Examples of programs that the

City offers are CalWORKs, food stamps, recreation and parks, museums, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, subsidized housing, maintenance of curbs and streets and many others to be listed.

The most important rights the ADA provides include:

1. **No Exclusion** - The ADA does not allow denial of entry to City programs, benefits, activities or services, simply because of a disability.

2. **Communication Access** - The ADA requires that City agencies communicate to people with disabilities in a manner that is as effective as communication with others. This may require providing services such as:

- large print or Braille (for people with visual impairments);
- ASL interpreters or captioning (for people with hearing impairments);
- readers (for people with learning disabilities, or other cognitive or visual impairments);
- communicating via TTY or the California Relay Service (by dialing 7-1-1) for people with speech or hearing disabilities.

3. **Programmatic Access** - The ADA also requires that City agencies modify their policies, practices and procedures in order to provide an equal opportunity for a person with a disability.

Examples of this may include:

- assistance in filling out forms;

- explaining materials or procedures in simpler language so that individuals with cognitive, learning or some psychiatric disabilities can easily understand them;
- an appointment so a person does not have to wait in a long line or in a crowded and noisy room;
- allowing a person with a psychiatric disability to apply for services over the phone instead of coming into the office.

4. Architectural Access - The ADA also requires that service areas, including bathrooms, public telephones, drinking fountains, etc., be architecturally accessible to people with disabilities.

Note: It is also against the law to retaliate, threaten or interfere with anyone who is exercising his or her rights or anyone helping that person to do so.

What can I do if my rights under the ADA are violated?

- Contact the ADA Coordinator for the Department involved
- Contact the Mayor's Office on Disability if you need further assistance