

# UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY ACCESS

## Neighborhood Access Points & the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

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## *Did You Know...*

- Approximately 19% of San Franciscans have disabilities.
- About 12% of people with disabilities are unemployed compared to 6.3% for people without disabilities. *(Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, 12/13)*
- 52% of workers with disabilities earned less than 25,000 in the previous year compared to 38% of workers without disabilities. *((U.S. Census Bureau, 03/14)*

## *Common Employment Barriers for People with Disabilities*

- ✓ Lack of knowledge of legal issues regarding disability.
- ✓ Lack of physical accessibility.
- ✓ Lack of assistive technology.
- ✓ Inflexible policies and procedures.

**Attitudes, lack of awareness  
& perceptions about disability**

## *Disability Defined...*

- Different laws define disability based on different criteria, such as income earning potential, specific diagnosis, etc. However:
- **Civil Rights Laws** define a person with a disability as an individual meeting ONE of the following three criteria:
  1. **Physical or Mental impairment** that limits one or more life activities.
  2. **A record** of such an impairment.
  3. **Being perceived** as having a disability though no impairment exists.

## ***The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: A Civil Rights Law, with Standard Expectations***

*For example:*

- **Don't Deny Participation or Service**

A wheelchair user who is recipient of JTAS, is unable to participate in a professional networking event because it is held in an inaccessible building.

- **Don't Segregate**

A youth who is blind seeking pre-employment services is referred exclusively to an organization serving people with disabilities instead of his neighborhood access point center.

- **Don't Retaliate or Coerce**

After she complains of lack of disability accommodations, a Deaf participant of the CityBuild Academy is dropped from the networking eligibility list although she completed all the necessary steps.

# City Contractors Must Comply with the ADA!

- Contractors must provide programs, services or activities in an accessible manner both *architecturally and programmatically*.
- Although as an individual agency you may have a lower threshold for compliance (Title III), the fact that you are contracted with a City Department, increases your compliance obligations (Title II).
- Before you say “no” contact your City contract monitor!

# What is Disability Access?



- Programs & services should be ***“accessible to and usable by people with disabilities”***
- It includes:
  1. Reasonable modifications to policies & procedures
  2. Communication access
  3. Architectural access

# *Reasonable Modification to Policies, Practices & Procedures*

We have the obligation to modify our policies, practices and procedures when needed to provide equal access – this is called a ***Reasonable Modification***

*For example:*

1. Allowing a program participant w/ an anxiety disorder to be accompanied by his emotional support animal while looking for a job or attending classes at the local access point.
2. Allowing a person w/dyslexia to take an oral exam instead of a written test at the hospitality training program.
3. Scheduling case management appointments ONLY in the afternoons for a client who is on psych medication that makes it difficult to function first thing in the morning.



# *Communication Access*

- People who have vision, hearing, or speech disabilities (“communication disabilities”) use different ways to communicate.
- Clients with mental health, cognitive or developmental disabilities may also have difficulty with communication.
- The ADA requires that we must ensure that communication with people with these disabilities is equally effective as communication with people without disabilities.

# *Methods for Providing Effective Communication ...*

- ***Alternate formats*** - Braille, large print (size 18, sans serif font) or electronic versions of documents are helpful to those with visual impairments and some learning disabilities.
- ***Auxiliary aids*** - assistive listening devices, readers, scribes, text to speech or screen reading software are helpful to seniors and people with various disabilities.
- ***Auxiliary services*** such as American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters & Real-Time Captioning (CART) providers are helpful for seniors, people who are Hard of Hearing and Deaf.
- ***Accessible IT & Electronic Media*** such as accessible websites, “smart” PDFs, especially formatted emails make electronic communications accessible to people who use assistive technology.

# *For Brief Communications...*

## Telecommunication Relay Service

Type



TTY Relay Caller



Relay Operator

Talk



Telephone User

**DIAL  
711**

## Video Relay Service (VRS)



Video relay caller uses webcam or video phone to sign to a video interpreter



The interpreter voices to hearing telephone user and interprets messages back to deaf video relay caller



Computer display with Video Interpreter

**Free & Confidential  
Service!**

# For Longer or More Complex Communications...



**In-Person Interpretation**

**Fee Based,  
Confidential Services**

## Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)



VRI enables deaf and hearing individuals who are in the same location to easily conduct conversations through a live remote interpreter, video conferencing technology, and a high-speed internet connection.

# IT & AT... What Does It All Mean?

- ***Accessible information technology (IT)*** refers to electronics and infrastructure that is used to access information. Accessible IT may include telephones, fax machines, copiers and website architecture.
- ***Assistive technology (AT)*** refers to items or software people with disabilities use to access electronic information or accomplish tasks. AT may include, switches, pointers, or special software such as text to speech or speech to text.

***Remember that accessible IT makes AT usable!***



# *Examples of Assistive Technology*



## *Access at Public Meetings...*

The Board of Supervisors' mandated policy is to have available:

- Assistive Listening Devices for meetings of 50>
- Real Time Captioning for meetings of 100>
- ASL Interpreter for meetings of 500>

***Remember that any video shown at a public meeting or produced with City funds must be open captioned OR accompanied with a transcript whether it is broadcasted or on a City website.***

***YouTube DOES NOT provide accurate or effective captioning!***

# *Accessible Meeting Notices*

- At a minimum, it includes:
  1. Accessibility features of the meeting site.
  2. Availability of auxiliary aids and services.
  3. A contact person (phone & email) for questions & disability related requests.
  4. Suggest (but do not require) a time frame for requests.
  5. Accessible transit to the site (optional).



## *A Word about Architectural Access...*



## *Maintenance of Accessible Features*

- It is not enough to be able to get into the site, users must also be able to navigate effectively.
- You must maintain accessible elements in good working order.
- Involve your City monitor in the department for additional resource help.
- MOD can also assist you with physical access solutions.

## *Next Steps for Full Disability Access...*

- Provide notice to your program participants about disability access features & policies.
- Become familiar w/ available resources Citywide.
- Develop policies in advance to handle disability related requests & educate your staff.
- When in doubt, consult with others (Department ADA Coordinator, MOD).

## We're Here to Help!

- *Citywide ADA Grievance Procedure*
- *Accessible Public Events Checklist*
- *ADA technical assistance*
- *City approved vendors for auxiliary aids and services*

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