

Hicksville Public Library
Americans with Disabilities Act
Adopted by the Board of Trustees January 15, 1999
Revised by the Board of Trustees, June 17, 2009
Revised by the Board of Trustees, December 16, 2016
Revised by the Board of Trustees, December 16, 2016

Self-Evaluation of the facilities, services, programs and employment practices of the
Hicksville Public Library

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AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Section A

Self-Evaluation of the Facilities, Services, Programs and Employment Practices of the Hicksville Public Library

Summary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

On July 26, 1990, President Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It requires that all business and government agencies cease any discriminatory practices against disabled people. The requirement for libraries under the ADA is to ensure that the operation of each service, program and activity, including employment, is readily available to and usable by patrons with disabilities. The library must accommodate all disabled in services offered, and must not discriminate against an individual employee with a disability in hiring or promotion and must also provide "reasonable accommodations to all employees with disabilities."

The ADA clearly outlines specific procedures that must be met. They are as follows:

1. By January 26, 1992, the library must begin a self-evaluation "survey of the facilities and services" to determine whether we are in compliance with the ADA regulations and how changes will be implemented. This self-evaluation and transition plan must remain on file and accessible to the public for a period of three years.
2. Librarians must cease discrimination in all services, activities, programs and practices no later than January 26, 1992. Structural

changes must be started as soon as possible and completed by January 26, 1995.

3. One staff member must be appointed as the ADA coordinator. The coordinator will identify, plan and carry out compliance activities and arrange periodic evaluations of all programs, services and facilities. The designated coordinator will also investigate any complaint alleging noncompliance with the ADA. The designated coordinator will also establish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any noncompliance with this act.

A "disability" is clearly defined under the ADA as "any physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, learning, working, sitting, standing, or caring for oneself."

Section B

Staff Awareness and Training

The reason for the existence of the library is to serve all able and disabled patrons, courteously. However, because of the Americans With Disabilities Act, it is expected that more patrons with disabilities will become regular users of the library as they become more aware of its many services. Various service organizations for the disabled will be consulted for information and advice on how to positively and effectively deal with disabled people. This information will be presented to all library employees at scheduled staff meetings.

Section C

Parking and Exterior Accessibility

Since it is believed that more disabled persons will be using our facilities in the future, additional reserved handicapped parking is planned. The possibility of an additional handicapped entrance in front of the library is now under consideration.

Section D

Accessibility of Interior Library Facilities

After a careful evaluation, most of the library's interior facilities were found to be accessible to disabled patrons. The main hallways, public areas, restrooms, and interior aisles were useable by persons in a wheelchair, on crutches, or using a walker. The different levels of the library were very accessible because of the interior elevator. The floor surfaces of the library are smooth and covered with a hard pile carpet with a rubber backing glued to the floor. All interior door frames are between 32 and 36 inches and wide enough for a wheelchair to pass through.

The restrooms, Children's Room, Periodical Room and Community Room are located on the lower level of the library and are easily accessible by an elevator.

The library elevator is barrier-free and centrally located. The controls are located at the height that is within reach of a person in a wheelchair. The buttons are easy to push and are marked with Braille letters. The elevator cab is large and can easily accommodate a wheelchair. For the benefit of visually impaired people, the elevator indicates its stop with a bell. The shaft has a braille sign on the door which indicates the current floor to a blind person.

There is a need for additional large lettered signs so the partially sighted person can locate the elevator. The main circulation desk where patrons check out and return books is 38 inches in height and the video desk is 31 inches. Both are within reach of a person in a wheelchair. However, if any patron requires assistance in returning or checking out library materials, it will be given by the library staff at either desk.

Every table in the adult section is of a minimum height of 28 inches from the floors. Most do not have any barriers or aprons underneath which could prevent use by a person in a wheelchair. However, because the tables in the Children's Room are much lower a wheelchair cannot fit easily under them. One higher table will be brought into the children's room for use by persons in a wheelchair.

In each of the two public restrooms on the lower level has a stall designed specifically for use by disabled patrons. For security reasons, the outer door is locked but will be unlocked and held open by an employee if a disabled person wishes to use the facility. There is now a heavy inner door in each restroom.

Outside the restrooms is a water fountain which has been specifically designed for persons using wheelchairs. A paper cup will be provided for any person who cannot bend to use this fountain. The public telephone on the main level is 31 inches in height and the buttons are easily reached by a person in a wheelchair. If a patron is unable to dial the telephone because of a sight disability a staff member of the library will do it upon request.

The Community Room is located in the lower level of the library and is easily accessible by the elevator. The Community Room is barrier free and there is an outside stairway on the north side which leads directly out of the building. On entering the

building, disabled people who will be attending a program or special event and must use the elevator to get to the Community Room will be asked to inform the staff at the circulation desk. These people will be seated in the aisles closest to the exterior stairway leading out of the building. In the event of an emergency when the elevator is not usable, designated library employees will aid these persons up the stairway and out of the building.

The Community Room has a raised stage which is accessible by two steps. It is under consideration to build a moveable ramp so that persons who use a wheelchair, crutches or walkers will be able to use the stage for programs or special events.

Most of the library's stacks, including those in the Children's room are at least 24 inches wide which allows for a wheelchair or a walker to pass through. However, the reference area stacks are narrower and a wheelchair or walker cannot easily pass through. Since a person in a wheelchair has a limited reach, both the top and bottom shelves are not reachable. If any disabled patron finds a particular area or section of the library inaccessible, the reference librarians will make every effort to deliver library materials and provide access to the needed materials.

Section E

Signage and Safety Measures

In the event of a fire, the library has 13 audible warning bells accompanied by simultaneous flashing lights for the benefit of those with hearing or visual disabilities.

A difficulty for those who are partially sighted are stairways. For the safety of partially sighted patrons, the leading edges of the library stairways, including the two in the Community Room will be marked with a 2 inch, non-skid tape in a bright contrasting color.

On doors that lead to areas not intended for patron use, such as the boiler room and downstairs closet, knurled door knobs will be installed.

In order for partially sighted persons to identify the restrooms, both will be marked with large protruding panels on the exterior face of the doors with identifying symbols (one for men, one for women).

Section F

Reference and Information Services

Every effort will be made by the librarians to meet the specific informational needs of persons with disabilities. The reference staff will evaluate the reference collection in the area of consumer health information, medical books and other health-related tools. Information will also be made available on the legal rights, programs and services, and special medical facilities and schools available to and for disabled patrons.

Four internet terminals and one on-line public access catalog terminal are wheelchair accessible.

Section G

Library Materials and the Disabled

Library materials are available in a variety of formats which the library owns. In addition to an extensive large-print book collection of fiction and non-fiction titles, the library has audio books, closed captioned videos, large-type newspapers, instructional compact discs and assistive listening devices. Additional purchases of these materials are planned for the future. The collection will be evaluated so that additional formats and related equipment can be made available to disabled patrons.

Section H

Employment of the Disabled

The Americans With Disabilities Act bans job discrimination because of disabilities and requires employers to make reasonable accommodations "for those with handicaps," but it allows an exception for changes that would bring "undue hardships." The law obligates employers to restructure jobs so that they can be performed by disabled workers with reasonable accommodations.

The equal employment section of the ADA protects all aspects of employment including hiring, firing, training, benefits, and promotion. An employer may have to offer training or such aids as readers or interpreters if these steps would enhance employment opportunities without causing undue hardship to the library. According to the law, it is up to the employer's judgment as to what functions of a job are essential.

In order to comply with the ADA and offer disabled persons an opportunity for library employment, written job descriptions and evaluations will be completed by the library administration. This analysis will identify the purpose of each job, what functions are absolutely essential for successful performance and the necessary accommodations which must be made for disabled individuals to successfully perform the job. Considerations and accommodations will be made on an individual basis as the need arises.

Section I

Conclusion

The Hicksville Public Library is dedicated to serving all of our patrons. We have added new technology as it has become available, with the needs of the disabled in mind. Programs and special events have also been made available to all our disabled patrons. We have attempted to maintain a barrier-free facility. The attitudes of our staff towards disabled patrons have been positive. A survey of our patrons will determine if they have any special needs or require special help. Every effort will be made to provide good library service.

If an individual believes that he or she was discriminated against on the basis of a disability, the individual can notify Elizabeth Goldfrank, the designated ADA Coordinator for the Hicksville Public Library. Every effort will be made to resolve the problem as soon as possible.