The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), which became federal law July 26, 1990, provides civil rights protections for persons with disabilities that parallel those established by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADA extends accessibility requirements established by Section 504 of the 1973 Act, which prohibits discrimination by recipients of federal funds, to private entities that serve the public. Thus, all private museums will be covered by the ADA, as well as museums now covered by Section 504.

The ADA requires employers with 15 or more employees to make reasonable accommodations to the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified applicant or employee (unless accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the employer); the act also prohibits the use of employment tests or other criteria that screen out individuals with disabilities, unless criteria are shown to be job-related and consistent with business necessity.

For employers with 25 or more employees, this requirement becomes effective July 26, 1992; for employers with 15 to 24 employees, July 26, 1994.

Under the ADA, all public accommodations, including museums, are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of disability; the Act’s definition of disabled persons includes those who are visually, hearing, mobility, and learning impaired. Very broadly, compliance involves:

1) Removal of physical barriers in existing facilities (January 26, 1992; January 26, 1993 for businesses with 10 or less employees and revenue $500,000 or less). The Act does not impose unlimited requirements on public accommodations; a physical barrier need be removed when it is removed in “readily achievable,” i.e., can be accomplished without undue difficulty or expense. Facility modifications are not required that will compromise the historic significance of a historic structure.

2) Accessibility in new construction and alterations in public accommodations, as well as in commercial facilities, if the facility was designed for first occupancy after January 26, 1993 (January 26, 1992 for alterations).

3) Reasonable modifications in policies, practices and procedures that discriminate against individuals with disabilities, unless these modifications would alter the nature of services provided.

4) Provision of auxiliary aids; i.e., those devices necessary to enable persons who have a visual, hearing, or sensory impairments to participate in the program, if the provision does not result in an undue burden on the institution.

The resources listed below can provide information that will assist in developing greater access to museums and museum programs and in meeting accessibility requirements of the ADA.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

The State of Oklahoma has a number of resources available to individuals with disabilities. These resources can be found in the following categories:

- **HEARING IMPAIRMENT**
  - Central Oklahoma Association for the Deaf, 120 North Robinson, Suite 100, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73102
  - Oklahoma State Technical Branch, 901 North Portland, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73107
  - Oklahoma Speech and Hearing Association, 512 South Meridian, Suite 200, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73104
  - (State Interpreter Service) 1-800-221-4602

- **VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**
  - Oklahoma Independent Living Resource Center, 321 South Third, Suite 2, McAlester, Oklahoma 74501
  - Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73104
  - 918/425-6220

- **MENTAL IMPAIRMENT**
  - Oklahoma Mental Health Association, 100 North 21st, Suite B, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73111
  - National Down Syndrome Society, 310 South Osage, Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74005
  - National Institute of Mental Health, 1200 North 12th, Room 200, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73103

- **OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES**
  - National Endowment for the Arts, 115 North Eleventh, Suite 7, Washington, D.C. 20506
  - 202/653-7848
  - 1-800-USA-ABLE

- **TEXTUAL CONTENT**

  **State and National Resource List**

  - The resource list developed by the State Arts Council of Oklahoma.
  - The list includes resources for individuals with disabilities, such as museums and arts programs.
  - Resources include organizations such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Oklahoma Historical Society, and the Oklahoma Museums Association.

  **Available from the Field Advisory Service:**

  - Oklahoma Independent Living Resource Center, 321 South Third, Suite 2, McAlester, Oklahoma 74501
  - 918/425-6220

  **Oklahoma Field Advisory Service:**

  - A Program of the Oklahoma Museums Association and the Oklahoma Historical Society
  - Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73104
  - 405/426-6220

  **Oklahoma Independent Living Resource Center:**

  - 321 South Third, Suite 2, McAlester, Oklahoma 74501
  - 918/425-6220

  **National Resource List:**

  - Available from the Field Advisory Service:
    - Oklahoma Independent Living Resource Center, 321 South Third, Suite 2, McAlester, Oklahoma 74501
    - 918/425-6220

  **Oklahoma Field Advisory Service:**

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  - Available from the Field Advisory Service:
    - Oklahoma Independent Living Resource Center, 321 South Third, Suite 2, McAlester, Oklahoma 74501
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