

Oklahoma Field Advisory Service: Technical Bulletin 8

A Program of the Oklahoma Museums Association and the Oklahoma Historical Society

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 its removal is "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 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

State and National Resource List *

HEARING IMPAIRMENT
Central Oklahoma Association for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired (COAD-HI)
1330 North Classen Boulevard, Suite 202
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106
405/236-5513

Oklahoma State Technical Branch
900 North Portland
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73107
405/947-4421

Tulsa Speech and Hearing Association
3112 South Mingo Road, Suite 100
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74146
(State Interpreter Service)
1-800-722-4552

National Association for the Deaf
814 Thayer Avenue
Silver Springs, Maryland 20910
301/587-1788

National Theatre for the Deaf
Hazel E. Stark Center
Chester, Connecticut 06412
203/526-4971

MENTAL IMPAIRMENT
Bureau of Services for the Developmentally Disabled
Post Office Box 25352
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73125
405/271-7505

Dale Rogers Training Center
2501 North Utah
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73101
405/946-4489

Oklahoma Department of Mental Health
1200 North East 13th
Post Office Box 53277
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
73152-3277
405/271-8644

Oklahoma Mental Health Association
5104 North Francis, Suite B
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73118
405/524-6363

National Downs Syndrome Society
666 Broadway, Suite 810
New York, New York 10012
1-800-221-4602

PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT
Center for the Physically Limited
815 South Utica
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74104
918/584-8607

Mid-America PVA
(Paralyzed Veterans of America)
5601 North West 72nd Street, Suite 135
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73132
405/721-7168

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT
Library for the Blind
1108 North East 36th
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73111
405/521-3514

American Council for the Blind
1155 15th St., N.W., Suite 720
Washington, D.C. 20005
1-800-424-8666

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTERS
Caddo County Independent Living Project
115 North East 1st, Room 7
Anadarko, Oklahoma 73005
405/477-7331

Green Country Independent Living Resource
310 South Osage
Post Office Box 2295
Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74005
918/336-0700

North Western Oklahoma I.L.C.
705 South Oakwood, Suite B1
Enid, Oklahoma 73703
405/237-8508

Oklahoma Independent Living Resource Center
321 South Third, Suite 2
McAlester, Oklahoma 74501
918/426-6220

Progressive Independence
121 North Porter
Norman, Oklahoma 73071
405/321-3203

Ability Resources
1724 East 8th
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74104
918/592-1235

MULTI-EMPHASIS
Office of Handicap Concerns
4300 North Lincoln Boulevard, Suite 200
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105
405/521-3756

State Department of Education
(Arts in Education)
2500 North Lincoln
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105
405/521-3034

Very Special Arts Oklahoma
Post Office Box 26942
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73126
405/521-3034

National Endowment for the Arts
Special Constituencies
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC
202/682-5532

OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES
National Institute of Building Sciences
1201 L St., NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005
202/289-7800

U.S. Architectural and Transportation
Barriers Compliance Board
1111 18th St., NW
Suite 501
Washington, D.C. 20005
202/653-7848
1-800-USA-ABLE

U.S. Department of Justice
10th & Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20530
202/514-2000

U.S. Department of Transportation
400 7th St., SW
Washington, DC 20590
202/366-4000

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity
Commission
1801 L St., NW
Washington, DC 20507
202/663-4264

Government Printing Office
Superintendent of Documents
Washington, DC 20402
The Arts and 504 Handbook (stock number 036-000-00047-3; \$5.00): An updated how-to guide for making arts programs accessible, designed to assist organizations in complying with the National Endowment for the Arts' 504 Regulations.

Department of Housing and Urban Development
Block Grant Assistance
451 Seventh Street, SW, Room 7280
Washington, DC 20410
202-755-6587
Community Development Block Grant funds are available through state and/or city to remove architectural barriers in public and private buildings (cities with populations of more than 50,000; urban counties with a population of 200,000 or more; small cities funds available to cities with a population of less than 50,000). State CDBG Program Manager: Sherwood Washington, Department of Commerce, 6601 Broadway Extension, Oklahoma City, OK 73116 (405-843-9770).

*Resource list developed by State Arts Council of Oklahoma

Available from the Field Advisory Service: *Part of Your General Public is Disabled: A Handbook for Guides in Museums, Zoos, and Historic Houses* and the videotape "Disabled Museum Visitors: Part of Your General Public." (FAS office: 405-521-2491; OMA Office: 405-424-7757)