

UNIVERSITY LEGAL
SERVICES
Protection & Advocacy Program



for the District of Columbia

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Know Your Rights
under the
Americans with
Disabilities Act (ADA):
Physical Access to
Government Services &
Facilities



UNIVERSITY LEGAL SERVICES, INC.
Protection and Advocacy Program
For the District of Columbia

Voting, Courthouses, and Other Government Buildings and Programs

- Under Title II of the ADA,¹ government programs, services and facilities must be fully accessible so that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to benefit from such services as public education, transportation, recreation, health care, libraries, social services, courts, and voting.
- Government agencies and their contractors must make their buildings and offices accessible unless doing so would cause ‘undue financial and administrative burdens’ or ‘fundamentally alter’ the services provided.

Metrorail, Buses, Trains, and Other Forms of Public Transportation

- ADA Title II prohibits disability-based discrimination in public transportation services such as Metro bus and rail, specialized transportation for senior citizens and people with disabilities such as paratransit van service. Public transportation authorities must provide wheelchair-accessible vehicles, stations, and facilities in each of these service areas.
- The ADA requires paratransit services in areas that have fixed-route bus and rail systems. The DC paratransit service is Metro Access, a curb-to-curb service for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use metro rail or bus. For more information about Metro Access, go to www.wmata.com or call (202) 637-1328.
- For more information about ADA transportation rights, contact the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Office of Civil Rights at (888) 446-4511.

Restaurants, Theaters, Taxis, Stores, Shelters and Other Public Accommodations

- ADA Title III² covers “public accommodations” which are private facilities that are open to the public such as restaurants, stores, hotels, theaters, private schools, doctors' offices, homeless shelters, and recreational facilities.
- Under Title III, public accommodations must not exclude, segregate, or provide unequal treatment to individuals because of their disabilities.
- Public accommodations must:
 - comply with specific architectural standards³ for new construction and renovated buildings and remove barriers in existing buildings to the “maximum extent feasible;”
 - make reasonable modifications to accommodate people with disabilities;
 - provide Braille signage and audible directional prompts and alarms for people with visual disabilities and visual alarms for people with hearing disabilities, among other access requirements;
 - offer services that are fully accessible to people with disabilities.
- Contact University Legal Services at (202) 547-0198 if you have problems accessing government services or public accommodations because of your disability.

¹ 42 USC §12132 et seq.

² 42 USC §12181 et seq.

³ 28 CFR §36.201