



1990 * Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the ADA * 2015

ADA 25th Anniversary Business Informer

DAWNcil

February 2015

**THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) WILL
TURN TWENTY-FIVE ON JULY 26, 2015!**

Why is ADA Compliance Good For My Business?

Nearly 1 in 5 Americans have a disability.
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

Almost 1/3 of all American families are impacted by
disability.
(Source: The National Service Inclusion Project)

Customers with disabilities and their families, friends
and associates represent a **\$3 TRILLION** market
segment.
(Source: Association of People Supporting Employment-First)

The vast majority of women, men and children of all
ages, races and ethnicities will experience a disability
some time during his or her lifetime.
(Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

**For information on how to make sure your
business is ADA compliant, you can check out
our new online ADA business toolkit at:
<http://dawncil.org/ada-business-toolkit/>**

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About

DAWN

DAWN Center for Independent Living is a nonprofit organization serving people with disabilities in Morris, Sussex, and Warren Counties. DAWN is one of 11 Centers for Independent Living (CILs) in New Jersey, and one of nearly 500 CILs nationwide. DAWN's services embody the Independent Living philosophy, which asserts that people with disabilities should have the same civil rights, choices, and control as do people without disabilities.

REAL LIFE STORIES

Restaurant Accessibility as a Wheelchair User

By Peter Gimbel, Independent Living Specialist

There is a restaurant in my neighborhood where I often go for dinner with my wife and our four-year-old. This restaurant does not take reservations for small parties. I use a big, motorized wheelchair, so we used to have a long wait for a table that I could get to. Even after waiting, I often had to ask other diners to stand and make room for me to pass.

This particular restaurant is a unique experience in our area. My daughter enjoys watching the pizza come out of the brick oven and seeing the fresh pasta being made. Just going to another restaurant was not an option. So we continued trying to ignore our frustration with the long wait times as we watched other people come in and be seated at tables I couldn't access.

One evening, the wait was longer than it had ever been. Our frustration finally boiling over, we told the manager we would have to leave. The manager told us that in the future, they would make an exception to their no reservations policy for us. Thanks to her willingness to make a simple accommodation, it is now much easier for us to visit this restaurant.

We have continued to go there even more frequently than before. Having a table reserved makes things easier not only for us, but also for the other diners, who no longer have to interrupt their meals to stand and let me pass. A small accommodation has made a very big difference.

A Day in the Life of a Deaf Man

By Rashid Elias, Independent Living Specialist

Daily experiences that hearing people take for granted may be a challenge for Deaf individuals. For example, ordering a coffee or lunch at a drive-through window: Deaf people cannot hear "May I help you?", or give an order over a speaker. A dry erase board or pen and paper at the drive up window would be helpful. Another example is communicating with attendants at a gas station. They may ask me what I need as they open the latch for gas, but I cannot hear the question or see their face. If paper and pen or a dry erase board were available, I could write my request down. For now, I utilize the text board on my mobile phone and show it to the attendant.

At a dentist's office, even when an interpreter is provided, it is often difficult to clarify information with the dentist's hands in your mouth and bright lights blinding your vision. For now, I indicate that the dentist must stop, so I can have the interpreter in view to translate. Eye fatigue is also an issue. Many Deaf people need to take a break from constant exercise of eyes (relied on for sign language) to absorb all the information coming at them throughout the day.

Business proprietors who have an awareness of these issues can become better prepared to serve those who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.



MORE REAL LIFE STORIES

From a Business Perspective

By Carolee Marano, Independent Living Program Supervisor

On September 30, 2014, with support from the Kessler Foundation, DAWN hosted a half-day presentation helping local employers learn how to increase the successful workforce inclusion of people with disabilities. Activities included a panel of employees along with local employers who are successfully practicing inclusion. One panelist was a Walgreens store manager. She has been working with local high schools to provide real work experiences to students with disabilities, many of whom have cognitive disabilities, and some of whom she eventually hires as openings occur. One of the questions posed by a local employer in the audience was, what do you do if a worker with a disability can't perform a certain task very well? The Walgreens manager replied that she and her employees do the same thing they would do if any worker had a non-essential task they found challenging – coworkers coordinate together to get the task done. She pointed out that if a relatively short employee needed to reach something that was a little too high up on a wall shelf, nobody would think twice about that person asking a taller co-worker for help. That same shorter employee might be called on to access a low space to retrieve something that would be harder for a taller co-worker to get to. Accommodations happen naturally in the workplace every day, she said, and her employees just don't see this as a problem. She said teamwork is highly valued at her stores, and so are inclusive attitudes, which makes for a stronger workforce overall. She added that her customers pick that up and like patronizing an inclusive business with a diverse workforce. ADA compliance increases opportunities for inclusion, and inclusion is good for business.

Water Fountain Accessibility

By Carl Brand, Independent Living Specialist

There is a doctor office that I used to go to before I had health insurance. There was a small, raised drinking fountain in the hallway of the building. The fountain jutted out from the wall. There happened to be an elderly woman with a cane passing me who was being led by the hand down the hall by a younger gentleman. I heard a small bang and the woman cried out in pain. I turned around to see her cane lying on the floor, and she was clutching her wrist.

The gentleman leading the woman had been on the left side of her. The water fountain was on the wall on the woman's right side. The man had apparently been looking down the hall at an obstacle, and missed the small water fountain. I turned around and picked up the cane for her. I told them I would mention the incident when I spoke with my doctor. They said that they planned to do the same when they reached the doctor they had come to visit that day.

I had always assumed that smaller water fountains actually improved the environment. I now realized that they could be more of a hazard than a larger fountain. I looked up the regulations and learned they recommend that a fountain be recessed into the wall, to prevent such incidents, and also to allow wheelchair users to lean in and use the fountain.

The ADA Turns 25—So What Exactly are we Celebrating?

By Carolee Marano, Independent Living Program Supervisor at DAWN

2015 marks the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act! This is a major event in the history of disability rights in the United States. Until as recently as the latter part of the 20th century, it was not uncommon for people with disabilities to be segregated from the rest of society and placed in institutions without their consent, and without access to the education or employment opportunities that were accessible to people without disabilities.

The Independent Living Movement/Disability Civil Rights Movement embraced the philosophy that people with disabilities should have the same civil rights, choices, and opportunities as people without disabilities. Even with expansive grassroots advocacy efforts by and for people with disabilities, it was not until 1990 that the first major legislation was passed expressly to protect the civil rights of people with disabilities. This legislation was called the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, or as it is more commonly known, the ADA. As former President George Bush, Sr. signed the ADA into law, he asserted, “Let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down.” That statement still resonates today, 25 years later, as tireless, ongoing advocacy efforts press on to advance the rights of people with disabilities.

The ADA is a broad-ranging civil rights law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability. It affords similar protections against discrimination to Americans with disabilities as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made discrimination based on race, religion, sex, national origin, and other characteristics illegal. Beyond the protections provided by the Civil Rights Act, the ADA requires covered employers to provide reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities, and imposes accessibility requirements on public spaces, amenities, and services. Effectively, the ADA makes it possible for people with disabilities to better access the same choices, opportunities, and civil rights as people without disabilities.

The ADA also introduced the idea of “reasonable accommodations,” which calls for employers to collaborate with workers with disabilities who are seeking typically inexpensive, simple (reasonable) adjustments in the workplace, that will allow them to do their work as effectively as a person without a disability. A reasonable accommodation might be as simple as purchasing an anti-glare screen for the PC monitor of a worker with a vision impairment.

The ADA is aligned with the Independent Living Movement in that it protects and supports the rights of people with disabilities. As one of roughly 500 Centers for Independent Living (CILs) in the United States working to advance the Independent Living Philosophy, DAWNcil embraces the 25th anniversary of the ADA as a unique and very important opportunity to continue to raise awareness as to the wants, needs, choices, and rights of people with disabilities. Throughout 2015, DAWNcil will conduct monthly activities focused on various ADA-related topics in honor of the 25th anniversary of the ADA. You can check DAWNcil’s website and newsletters (available by mail or on the website), or call or email for specific information: main number 973-625-1940, video relay 973-453-4689, email info@dawncil.org.



Changes to the Rehabilitation Act (Section 503)

Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was recently updated. Section 503 requires that companies doing business with the federal government take affirmative action to recruit, employ, train and promote qualified individuals with disabilities. The changes strengthen the affirmative action provisions of the Section 503 regulations. For more information, please visit <http://usodep.blogs.govdelivery.com/2014/07/16/what-you-should-know-about-section-503/>.

ADA Business Toolkit

DAWN has just added a new ADA Business Toolkit to our website! The ADA Business Toolkit is a collection of reference materials and resources for businesses seeking to evaluate and/or improve their compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. It can be found online at <http://dawncil.org/ada-business-toolkit/> or under the Resources menu in our website's navigation bar.

The resources in the Toolkit are divided into four categories: General Information, Employing People with Disabilities, Self-Evaluation and Specific Regulations, and Online Resources. General Information includes fact sheets and FAQs about the ADA and related topics, as well as an informative guide to disability etiquette.

Employing People with Disabilities encompasses a variety of materials related to hiring and working with employees with disabilities. Self-Evaluation and Specific Regulations contains technical information for improving ADA compliance. Online Resources is a collection of links that provide further information, including a free online course about reaching out to customers with disabilities. These resources provide more in-depth information to supplement what can be found in the Toolkit.

We hope that you will explore our ADA Business Toolkit and benefit from the wealth of resources that can be found there. Once again, the address is <http://dawncil.org/ada-business-toolkit/>. The Toolkit can also be accessed via the Resources menu at the top of our home page at <http://dawncil.org/>. If you need further assistance with ADA compliance, please contact us at 973-625-1940 or info@dawncil.org.

DAWN Services

DAWN offers technical assistance to businesses in complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act. We have several people on our staff who are trained to give presentations on the ADA as a whole or with a focus on particular areas, such as service animals and accessible parking. We also can answer questions by phone or email. If we don't know the answer to your question, we will seek it out or find out who you can talk to for more specific information. For a consultation or to schedule a presentation, please call us at 973-625-1940 or send an email to info@dawncil.org.

Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the ADA!



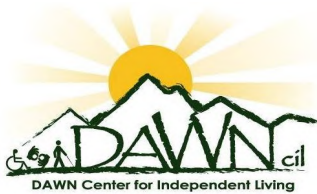
- This mailing includes info about:
- The 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act
 - ADA Facts
 - Real Life Stories from people with disabilities and businesses
 - Connecting businesses to job candidates with disabilities
 - And more!



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We are on the web!
www.dawncil.org
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DAWN MISSION STATEMENT

DAWN Center for Independent Living empowers people with disabilities to strive for equality and to take control of their own lives by:

- Providing the tools that encourage independence and self-advocacy.
- Promoting public awareness of the needs, desires and rights of individuals living with disabilities.
- Offering community activities that create new experiences and opportunities.
- Creating informed communities that advance the Independent Living Philosophy.

DAWN PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING SERVICES AND MORE:

- Independent Living Skills Training
- DDD Support Coordination
- Living Well with a Disability
- Skills for Independent Living (SkIL)
- Early Intervention Service Coordination
- Aktion Club (Morris County only)
- Brain Injury Alliance Support Group
- Working Well with a Disability
- Advocacy
- Peer Support
- Recreation
- Information and Referral
- Next Chapter Book Club
- Care Management
- It's All About Work
- Employment/EN Services

DAWN may be able to help your business connect to customers and job seekers