

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan

Introduction

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law in 1990. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life. The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities, similar to those provided to individuals based on race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications. The ADA comprises five titles (or sections) that relate to different areas of public life.

ADA Transition Plans are a federally mandated requirement by Title II (State and Local Government) of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Title II of ADA states that no qualified individual with a disability be excluded from participation or denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities based on disability.

The City of Lawrence is committed to improving accessibility in all our facilities, services, and activities, to ensure integration and full participation by all our community members.

Context

In 1992, the City of Lawrence established a report on accessibility to create a baseline from which the City could continue to improve accessibility for citizens with disabilities. This report provided a self-evaluation and plan for accessibility improvements. Since that time, significant modifications and amendments were made to the ADA statutes and the federal regulations implementing the ADA. Accordingly, the City of Lawrence has undertaken a comprehensive reevaluation of its policies, programs, and facilities to determine the extent to which individuals with disabilities may be restricted. This plan seeks to update the 1992 plan. It describes the process developed to complete the reevaluation of Lawrence's activities, provides policy and program recommendations, and presents an updated transition plan for the structural modification of facilities, public rights-of-way, and programs to ensure accessibility.

As approved and accepted by the Lawrence City Commission, this plan will guide the planning and implementation of necessary program and facility modifications over the next several years. This plan is significant in that this update establishes the City's ongoing commitment to the development and maintenance of policies, programs, and facilities that include all Lawrence citizens.



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ADA Transition Plan Update

An integral part of the ADA Transition plan process is the City's Self-Evaluation. The Self-Evaluation is the City's assessment and evaluation of its current facilities, services, policies, and practices. It identifies those that may not meet, or are inconsistent with, the requirements of the Title II regulations. To the extent modifications to services, policies, and practices are required, the City expects to make such modifications.

Following approval of the Transition Plan, non-structural program modifications are expected to be made within the next year or as soon after that as is reasonably possible.

The ADA also sets forth specific requirements for the preparation of an acceptable transition plan. At a minimum, the elements of the plan should include:

- Identifying physical barriers in City facilities that limit the accessibility of its programs, activities, or services to individuals with disabilities;
- A detailed outline of the methods to be used to remove these barriers and meet the current standards and accessibility regulations;
- Where structural modifications are required, a schedule for taking the steps necessary to achieve compliance with Title II of the ADA; and
- The name of the City official responsible for the plan's implementation.

The City of Lawrence also has responsibility for the **Public-Rights-of-Way**. Public-Rights-of-Way establishes authority over streets, roads, or walkways. An additional transition plan for public-rights-of-way will be presented at a later date. However, the self-evaluation portion of the public-rights-of-way will run parallel to the self-evaluation of the City's facilities, services, and programs. Best practices for a city the size of Lawrence is to divide these Transition Plans into two separate "living documents," to ensure adequate evaluations of our infrastructure, inventory, and set scheduling based on priorities identified. The City of Lawrence has included the following in the criteria for prioritizing facilities in the public rights-of-way:

- Locations serving government offices and public facilities;
- Location serving transportation;
- Locations serving commercial districts and employers; and
- Locations serving other areas

In addition to the required criteria, the City has prioritized the following:

- Locations of citizen complaints;
- Requests for ADA Title II program access;
- Sites along the Priority Network



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Public Engagement

The ADA requires that meaningful public participation be included as part of the ADA Transition Plan drafting and adoption process. The City will work with local disability groups, community members, and City Advisory Committees to solicit feedback as part of our self-evaluation. The City will also incorporate comments and suggestions that have obtained through the City's website: www.lawrenceks.org/access.

Schedule

The City's ADA Transition Plan will be completed in two sections, while the self-evaluations will work in concert of one another. The Facilities, Services, and Programs Transition Plan will be presented to the Commission in the early part of 2022, and the Public-Rights-of-Way Transition Plan will follow in the Spring of 2023. All non-structural program or service modifications will be made within a year of Transition Plan approval.

Timeline for Facilities, Services, and Programs

Task 1- Public Input-Steering Committee Development (Spring/Summer 2020)

- Collaborate with local Disability Organizations.
- Work with City Advisory Committees and community members that includes representation from a wide range of disabilities.
- Create and disseminate community input surveys specific to City ADA requirements.

Task 2-Self-Evaluation of Programs, Services, and Facilities (Spring 2020-Winter 2021)

- Identify all programs, activities, and services and their locations.
- Determine whether employees and officials are familiar with the City's ADA obligations, including the requirement to make reasonable modifications to policies, practices and procedures.
- Determine whether employees and officials know how to arrange for auxiliary aids and services, such as sign language interpreters, material in Braille and assistive listening systems; to ensure that communication with people with disabilities is as effective as others.
- Review service, activity and program's policies and procedures to determine whether they ensure an equal opportunity for people with disabilities to participate and benefit.
- Survey facilities and determine whether there are physical barriers to access programs. If non-structural changes, such as moving programs, should be made, include them in the action plan. If structural changes are needed, include them in the transition plan.

Task 3- Draft Transition Plan for Facilities, Services and Programs (Spring 2021)

- A list of the physical barriers that limit the accessibility of programs, activities, or services.
- The methods to remove the barriers and make the facilities/programs accessible.
- A schedule and budget for achieving compliance.
- The name of the official(s) responsible for the plan's implementation.

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Task 4- Develop a Priority Schedule for Access Improvements (Spring/Summer 2021)

- Analyze data collection.
- Review criteria for prioritization.
- Cost projections.

Task 5- Plan Approval for Facilities, Services, and Programs (Winter 2022)

- Lawrence City Commission.

Timeline for Public-Rights-of-Way

Task 6- Evaluate Public Rights-of-Way (Fall 2020 through Fall 2022)

- Identify all public right-of-way infrastructure: Pedestrian signals, curb ramps, sidewalks, parking lots, transit stops, and shared use trails.
- Incorporate GIS systems and Data Management.
- LIDAR and Imagery

Task 7- Develop a Priority Schedule for Access Improvements in Public-Rights-of-Way (Fall/Winter 2022/23)

- Analyze data collection.
- Review criteria for prioritization.
- Cost projections.

Task 8- Plan Approval for Public-Rights-of-Way (Spring 2023)

- Lawrence City Commission.

Task 9- Monitor Progress of each Transition Plan (Winter 2022-Ongoing)

- Use the Transition Plan in annual planning cycles.
- Establish a baseline from initial inventory.
- Make the Transition Plan a “Living Document”
- Update annually.
- Develop a tracking system to monitor progress.

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