



# National Network

Information, Guidance, and Training on the  
Americans with Disabilities Act



## 2015 PROFILE





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For the most current and accessible version, please visit [adainfo.us/nationalprofile](http://adainfo.us/nationalprofile)

*This report provides an overview of the activities of ADA National Network and information about the unique projects of each of the ten ADA Regional Centers.*

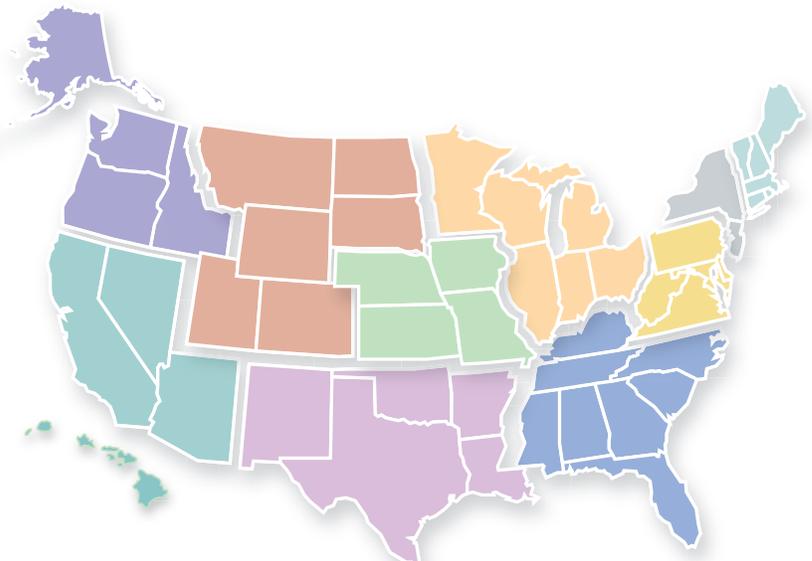
## About the ADA National Network

The ADA National Network provides information, guidance and training on how to implement the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in order to support the mission of the ADA to “assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.”

Funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, the network consists of ten Regional ADA Centers located throughout the United States and an ADA Knowledge Translation Center (ADAKTC)

Each Regional ADA Center focuses on its region’s unique needs. This regional focus is critical to ensuring that ADA National Network services meet the needs of a diversity of populations and stakeholders throughout the country.

**Over 56 million people in the United States have a disability.\***



### What is the ADA?

The ADA is the first comprehensive civil rights act for people with disabilities. It was passed by Congress and signed into law by President George H. W. Bush on July 26, 1990. The ADA protects people with disabilities from discrimination in all aspects of employment, in access to public programs and services such as transportation, and in access to public places like businesses, restaurants, stores, hotels, places of entertainment, and other service establishments.

\* The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2010. See [www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p70-131.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p70-131.pdf)

### Why is the ADA Important?

The ADA has empowered people with disabilities by banning discrimination on the basis of their disability and by making it possible for them to participate more inclusively in their communities.

Although there have been significant changes since the ADA was passed in 1990, people with disabilities continue to encounter barriers that affect their ability to live, work, and recreate freely in their communities.

## Whom does the ADA National Network Serve?

Since the ADA National Network was started in 1991, it has served all sectors of society, including those with responsibilities under the ADA such as businesses, employers, state and local governments, architects, disability organizations and individuals with disabilities whose rights are protected under the ADA.

## What services are provided by the National Network?

### Information and Guidance from an ADA Specialist

ADA specialists in each of the ten Regional ADA Centers provide information and guidance to anyone requesting ADA information through 1-800 calls, emails, and in-person consultations.

ADA specialists address complex questions on a wide range of ADA topics such as reasonable accommodations at work, building codes for new construction projects, accessible housing, and transitioning from school to work.

ADA specialists also address questions about other disability laws, such as the:

- Fair Housing Act
- Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act
- Rehabilitation Act

### Providing ADA information

In collaboration with the ADAKTC, Regional ADA Centers develop evidence-based factsheets and guidebooks on high priority and timely ADA topics such as service animals, effective communication, accessible parking, and how to plan accessible events.

ADA Centers also develop and provide information specific to their state laws and regulations, and offer an extensive network of regional referrals.

**Over 235,000 individuals are directly served by the ADA National Network each year.**

### Training and Outreach

The ADA National Network offers a variety of training, from basic to advanced, on all ADA topics such as:

- Accessible information technology
- ADA and education (pre-K through post-secondary)
- Accessible architectural design
- ADA and employment
- Accessible health care
- Emergency preparedness
- ADA and hospitality

Training is provided in-person or through distance technology such as webinars, podcasts and web courses.

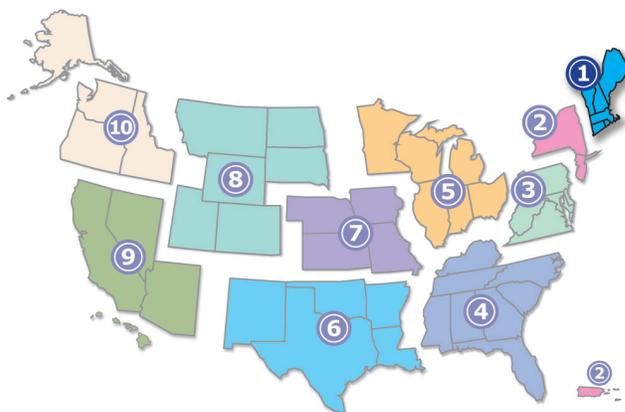
The majority of training activities are conducted at the local, state or regional level and are tailored to meet the needs of each specific audience.



**To contact an ADA specialist, call the toll free number 1-800-949-4232.**

# Region 1 New England ADA Center

[www.newenglandada.org](http://www.newenglandada.org)



The New England ADA Center serves Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island and Connecticut.

The New England ADA Center is located in Boston at the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD). Our work uniquely balances expertise in legally required accessibility and best practices in human-centered design and universal design.

## ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities

The ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities is a popular, easy-to-use tool for assessing accessibility of private and public facilities. Based on the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design, the Checklist addresses the accessibility of approach and entrance, goods and services, and toilet rooms. In addition, recreation checklists are available including pools, play areas, and sport facilities. The Checklist is available at [www.ADAChecklist.org](http://www.ADAChecklist.org).

## ADA Field-Based Training Day for Cities and Towns

The ADA Field-Based Training Day provides hands-on training on how to survey public facilities to identify and prioritize accessibility issues.

City and town halls, libraries, and recreation areas in New England have been surveyed. For more information, visit [www.newenglandada.org/field-based-training-cities-towns](http://www.newenglandada.org/field-based-training-cities-towns).

## ADA Web Courses

Free self-paced web courses on the ADA and other disability rights laws can be found at [learn.newenglandada.org](http://learn.newenglandada.org). Courses are available 24/7 and offer continuing education credits. Last year we had 3,000 registrants! This year, a new course on Architectural Accessibility Laws is available.

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*"I thought I knew a lot, but once I took this course, I learned so much more! We work with Wounded Soldiers and I have passed these web courses on to my co-workers."*

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## ADA Updates on the Talking Information Center Radio

Now, Americans with print disabilities can listen to ADA Radio Updates on the Talking Information Center Radio Show, "Mission Possible." These Updates are also available on our New England ADA Center website.

## Policy Change for Arts Council

The Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) promotes creative communities through arts and culture in Massachusetts by providing grants and services to community organizations ([www.massculturalcouncil.org/](http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/)).

MCC worked with the Institute for Human Centered Design and the New England ADA Center to develop a new initiative called UP!. This initiative aims to implement state-of-the-art accessibility and universal design within all MCC activities and offer an exemplary case study for the nation.

The UP! project involves four full-day workshops on accessibility in the cultural sector that include modules on universal design and inclusive physical environments, information, communication, and programming.

## 24th ADA Anniversary Poetry Slam and Art Exhibit

The 24th Anniversary of the ADA Art Extravaganza featuring a Poetry Slam and Art Exhibit was successful with 75 art and poetry aficionados attending the opening reception.

This event allowed us to accomplish our goal of meeting new people and telling them about our services.

The Poetry Slam can be heard on the Talking information Radio Program, Mission Possible. To listen, visit, [soundcloud.com/ticnetwork/mission-possible-poetry-slam](http://soundcloud.com/ticnetwork/mission-possible-poetry-slam).

## Universally Designed Carousel on Rose Kennedy Greenway



The Rose Kennedy Greenway is home to a new attraction - a 36-seat carousel. Because of the work of the New England ADA Center, the carousel features native Massachusetts animal figures designed to accommodate people of all ages and abilities. The pavement surrounding the carousel is designed for wheelchairs, with a pull-out ramp for riders using mobility devices. The animals provide a variety of seating options; for example, people in wheelchairs have access to four seats: the seal, a rabbit, a chariot and a rocking boat.

The universal design aspects include lighting and acoustics that can be adjusted as well as some textured animals with hand held straps. For more information, go to [www.rosekennedygreenway.org/about-us/planning/about-carousel-project](http://www.rosekennedygreenway.org/about-us/planning/about-carousel-project).

## Save the Date! 25th ADA Anniversary Celebration on Boston Common

In honor of the 25th Anniversary of the ADA, the New England ADA Center is leading the effort to celebrate on Boston Common on Wednesday July 22, 2015. We will mark this important milestone with a public celebration that brings together great speakers and performers in the heart of Boston. For more information, visit [ada25boston.org](http://ada25boston.org).



## The Hudson Estuary Accessibility Project

In 2013, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) funded the Employment and Disability Institute's coordination of the Hudson Estuary Accessibility Project.

The Northeast ADA Center coordinated evaluations of 18 outdoor recreational sites with a goal of increasing physical accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Legal compliance evaluations were conducted by United Spinal Association, and members of eight Independent Living Centers (ILCs) completed "user perspective" assessments of the sites. After we shared the assessment results and provided awareness trainings for DEC personnel, the NYSDEC released a funding opportunity for entities to act on the project recommendations.

The Northeast ADA Center also:

- brought together project partners
- created an assessment protocol for ILC partners
- provided consultations and training to the NYSDEC, and
- developed a business community "handbook" which included information about rights and responsibilities under the ADA as well as practical tips for providing good customer service to individuals with disabilities.



## The Just-in-Time Toolkit Project

The Northeast ADA Center, in partnership with the ADANN, developed, implemented, and is currently evaluating the Just-in-Time (JIT) Toolkit Program. The purpose of JIT is to enable employers to more fully implement the ADA and inclusive practices within their organizations. It is designed to educate mid-level managers and supervisors about how to better manage and include individuals with disabilities in their organizations.

As of February 2015, we have implemented the JIT within eleven organizations. These organizations

include four government agencies and seven privately held companies, many of whom are federal contractors.

Several organizations identified the recently revised Section 503 Regulations as the

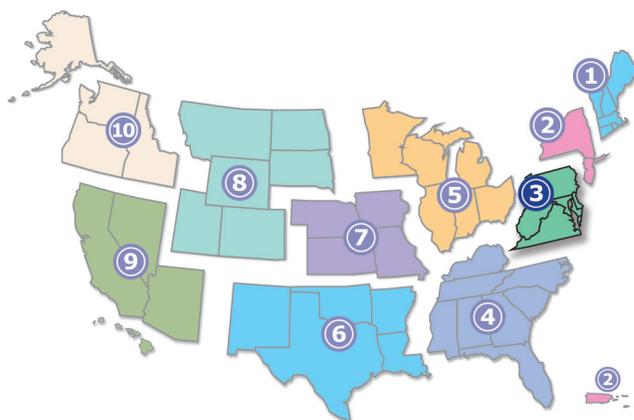
driver for the interest in the JIT.

Mid-level managers are recognized as creating a culture that fosters diversity. As one partner, a multinational electronics company, stated, "It is the front line managers who make or break the culture within an organization around disability with the first conversation they have with an employee who may have a disability."

By educating managers, employers hope to create a culture that is truly accepting of all types of diversity, as well as an "always available" resource on company policies and practices for managers.

# Region 3 Mid-Atlantic ADA Center

[www.adainfo.org](http://www.adainfo.org)



The Mid-Atlantic ADA Center serves Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.

## Hospitality Initiative

The Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, a project of TransCen Inc., hosts the ADA National Network's (ADANN) Hospitality Initiative and has developed and supported the Initiative by working with the lodging and restaurant industry.

In 2014 the Mid-Atlantic Center's director, Marian Vessels, was interviewed and the ADANN was cited as the



go-to resource for ADA information in articles on Service Animals and drive-by law suits published in the Asian American Hotel Owners Association's membership magazine, *AAHOA Lodging Business*.

The Center partnered with American Hotel and Lodging Association to provide a webinar on Service Animals to over 260 members. The National Restaurant Association interviewed Marian for two articles posted in online magazines for members on Serving Customers with Disabilities.

## Mid-Atlantic ADA Update

The 21st annual Mid-Atlantic ADA Update was held from September 16 through September 18, 2014 at the BWI Airport Marriott Hotel near Baltimore. Over 275 participants from 15 states and the District of Columbia came to the conference. Participants included staff from state, local, and federal government agencies, disability advocacy groups, businesses, non-profit organizations and individuals with disabilities

The 2014 Mid-Atlantic ADA Update included a half-day pre-conference session that provided an ADA Overview, a half-day plenary session which featured representatives of the Federal enforcement agencies, and 20 breakout sessions with an interactive question and answer format. The plenary session concluded with a keynote address by Equal Employment Opportunity Commissioner, Chai Feldblum.

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*"The conference was very good, informative of the ADA, the 2010 Standards, the Architectural Barriers Act, the ADA Amendments, the US Access Board and so much more! The two-day event was so worthwhile to our Department and we are sure to all the others in attendance. "*

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## ADA Leadership Network

The Mid-Atlantic ADA Center's ADA Leadership Network (ADA-LN) grew considerably in 2014. There are currently 118 members from across the Mid-Atlantic Region.

ADA-LN completed 41 face-to-face trainings, reaching a total of over 800 people. These trainings continue to gain in popularity so we are anticipating the total number reached per year to increase in 2015.

Select training modules were imbedded into a major university's online training available to over 20,000 staff and students. The ADA-LN also expanded into the corporate sector through designing trainings specifically for businesses in the region. The first "corporate only" training was hosted by Booz Allen Hamilton and co-sponsored by the DC Metro Business Leadership Network. Our corporate training focused on the unique needs and challenges within the business sector, and allowed the trainers to further educate businesses on the importance of the ADA. Based on the success of the first training, the ADA-LN is looking forward to its second "corporate only" training hosted by Northrop Grumman in the spring of 2015.

Trainers accepted into the Leadership Network are experienced professionals with knowledge of the ADA. Through the ADA-LN, each trainer has access to training support and advice, networking through quarterly trainings and an email listserv, as well as incentives, including potential subsidized attendance at the Mid-Atlantic ADA Update Conference every September.

## In-Person Trainings

Requests for in-person trainings continue to be in demand throughout our region.

Specifically, over the last 12 months we

trained over 800 employees for a large state agency in Maryland. The training on the ADA was required for all staff before the end of 2014. As a result we conducted multiple trainings throughout Maryland on the ADA and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

We have been invited back to conduct additional trainings in 2015. The evaluations from those trainings included a participant stating they learned "The importance of the ADA being a Civil Rights Act."



## ADA Pledge ON! Campaign

The Center has taken the lead for the ADANN Pledge ON! Campaign. Our Center developed a postcard that has been used nationally to encourage the public to sign and proclaim their continued

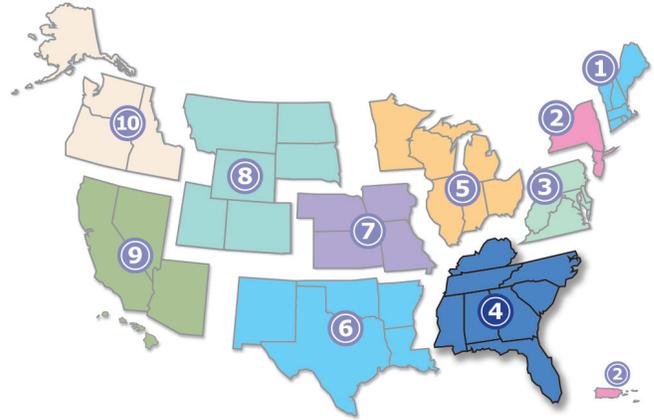
commitment to the ADA. The national goal is to post 25,000 pledge and proclamations on ADAanniversary.org by July 26 and to encourage individual and community participation in the ADA Anniversary celebrations.

Together with the ADANN and the Southeast ADA Center, which hosts the ADAnniversary.org website, we hope to further encourage the country to celebrate the successes of the ADA and to identify and commit to resolving the continuing challenges of full inclusion of those with disabilities.

**To sign the pledge, go to [adaanniversary.org/pledgeon](http://adaanniversary.org/pledgeon).**

# Region 4 Southeast ADA Center

[www.adasoutheast.org](http://www.adasoutheast.org)



The Southeast ADA Center serves Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Our region includes large urban centers, such as Atlanta, Georgia and Miami, Florida, as well as the very rural areas of northern Mississippi and eastern Kentucky. In order to meet the varied needs of stakeholders throughout our diverse region, the Southeast ADA Center funds an eight-state Affiliate Network to promote voluntary compliance with the ADA through outreach, training and dissemination of accurate ADA information to individuals, businesses, employers, professionals and state and local governments within each state. The Affiliate Network consists of state and local groups and organizations that represent the interests of individuals with disabilities and family members. Our Center provides financial support, technical assistance and training to help our State Affiliates promote voluntary ADA compliance throughout each state.

## Community Accessibility

Trained volunteers and staff from two State Affiliates, Disability Rights and Resources (Alabama) and LIFE of Mississippi, have conducted nearly 200 ADA accessibility site surveys of local businesses and government entities. The purpose of these surveys is to encourage voluntary removal of barriers and facilitate the inclusion of individuals with disabilities as they move from institutions such as group and nursing homes back into the community. To date, 30% of the entities surveyed have made accessibility changes.

## Program Access

Two North Carolina State Affiliates, the Alliance of Disability Advocates and the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities, worked with individuals with intellectual disabilities to create and pilot a publication named *The Leader's Guide: Starting the Conversation with A Business*. Using this guide, grassroots groups made up of individuals with disabilities focus on one or two readily achievable changes that would make a business more accessible for them. State Affiliates in Tennessee and Mississippi have also piloted this tool. Surveyed sites are using this information to make the suggested access changes.



## ADA Training for Veterans

Southeast ADA Center State Affiliates in Florida and Kentucky worked with military and veterans groups to identify needs and to educate veterans with disabilities about the ADA.

Our affiliate Boley Centers, Inc. (FL) provides ADA and employment training for homeless veterans who are seeking jobs. Nearly three-quarters of the veterans who participated in the trainings are now successfully employed.

Participants reported how they benefitted from the trainings. Key benefits included:

- learning that they did not have to reveal their disability to their employer
- understanding what accommodations they could ask for at their job

Another affiliate, MLM Associates (KY), trained National Guard troops at Fort Campbell and developed a publication, *Guide for Veterans: Know Your Employment Rights Under the ADA* at [adasoutheast.org/publications/ada/Employment\\_Rights\\_Under\\_ADA\\_Vets.pdf](http://adasoutheast.org/publications/ada/Employment_Rights_Under_ADA_Vets.pdf)

## WADA ADA Live!

"ADA Live!," the Center's internet-based radio station ([www.blogtalkradio.com/wada-se](http://www.blogtalkradio.com/wada-se)), airs from 1:00 - 1:30 pm ET on the first Wednesday of each month. ADA Live! reaches an average of 900 listeners each month, addressing topical issues and providing accurate ADA information delivered by regional and national experts. Listeners can also post questions and download resources for each of the 17 shows to date at [www.adalive.org](http://www.adalive.org), a fully accessible and interactive website.



## Family Education

Parent to Parent (P2P) of Georgia is the Center's newest State Affiliate. Its mission is supporting families and individuals with disabilities from birth to age 26. In 2014, P2P collaborated with the Southeast ADA Center in the delivery of two webinars:

- "ADA Basics" (215 registered)
- "Youth Transition to Employment" (161 registered)

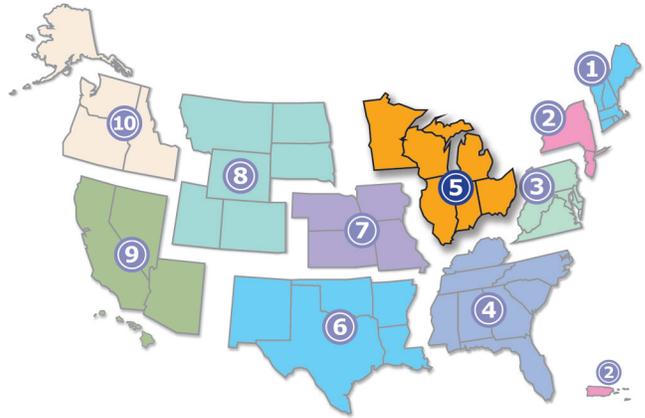
Interest in the two topics was not limited to the Southeast Region; participants joined from across the country, including North Dakota, Kansas and Vermont. Given this demonstrated interest and need for training on ADA Basics, the Southeast ADA Center is collaborating with the Mid-Atlantic, Pacific and Northeast ADA Centers on creating a four-part ADA Basics webinar series, in English and Spanish, to be delivered in 2015.

## ADA Training and Information

"ADA Basic Building Blocks" ([www.adabasics.org](http://www.adabasics.org)), one of four fully accessible online courses developed and maintained by the Southeast ADA Center, is used by State and local governments in several states, either in response to settlement agreements with the U.S. Department of Justice or the need for accurate, on-demand training for all staff. These include: the City of Jacksonville, Florida; New Mexico Department of Children, Youth and Families; Volusia County (FL) Division of Corrections; State of Alaska Department of Administration; and the South Florida Workforce. Kansas Works and the Seminole County (FL) 911 also use another online course, "At Your Service: Welcoming Customers with Disabilities" ([www.wiawebcourse.org](http://www.wiawebcourse.org)), for ongoing staff training.

# Region 5 Great Lakes ADA Center

[www.adagreatlakes.org](http://www.adagreatlakes.org)



The Great Lakes ADA Center serves Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

The Great Lakes ADA Center is a program of the Department of Disability and Human Development under the College of Applied Health Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

## Quality Indicators in Assistive Technology for Post-Secondary

The Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology in Post-Secondary (QIAT-PS) education gives institutions the ability to self-assess and more effectively direct their limited resources to increase the effectiveness of outcomes for students with disabilities. The QIAT-PS project offers tools and resources on quality implementation of assistive technology (AT) in the post-secondary educational environments. QIAT-PS is a collaborative effort of hundreds of professionals from a wide variety of higher education and K-12 schools and based on the successful implementations of AT indicators in K-12 public schools.

This project is sponsored in collaboration with the Southwest ADA Center with contributing partnership from the Easter Seals Arkansas, Adirondack Accessibility, and Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD). For more info, go to [www.qiat-ps.org](http://www.qiat-ps.org).

## Punch-in Project

Punch-in is an interactive website and social network for young adults with disabilities to navigate the Americans with Disabilities Act, assistive and accessible technology options, and groundwork skills necessary to find and keep employment. The site is fully accessible and features over 40 captioned videos, tutorials, and employment event opportunities. There is also a free, online moderated course under development.

This project is sponsored by our center with contributing partnership from employment and disability professionals in the Great Lakes ADA Center region and nationally. Formal collaborators include Niche Movement, MN Star Program, The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, PC Coaches, and University of Illinois Chicago Career Services.

For more information, go to [www.punch-in.org](http://www.punch-in.org).

## ADA Case Law Database & Digest

Our center developed the ADA Case Law Database and Digest to cover significant and recent rulings under the Employment (Title I), Local and State Government (Title II) and Places of Public Accommodations (Title III) provisions of the ADA and make it easily accessible to the general public.

The searchable database contains significant court cases, settlement agreements, and consent decrees that help interpret the ADA. The Digest features recent cases added to ADA Case Law Database each quarter.

There are over 5,000 individual accounts established to date. For more information, go to [www.adacaselaw.org](http://www.adacaselaw.org).



## ADA Audio Conference Series

The ADA Audio Conference Series is designed to support professional development of an individual, an entire department, or an entire agency that aims to increase knowledge and awareness of regulations and trends of the ADA.

Each audio conference is led by a leading expert in the topic area, is 90 minutes, and offered in multiple formats. Continuing education credits are also available upon request.

Recent conferences include:

- Disclosure of Disability under the ADA and its relationship to Section 503 Regulations
- Implementing Olmstead: The Status of Enforcement Efforts

For more information, go to [www.ada-audio.org](http://www.ada-audio.org).

## AccessibilityOnline

AccessibilityOnline is a series of webinars and audio conferences that are coordinated by the Great Lakes ADA Center. The program represents a collaborative training program between the ADANN and the US Access Board.

Sessions are held on a monthly basis and cover a variety of topics concerning accessibility to the built environment, information and communication technologies, and transportation. Continuing education credit is offered to architects, engineers, planners and code officials. The program is attended by an average of 1100 individuals per month. The sessions are recorded and archived to allow individuals to reference this information on an as needed basis.

Examples of recent topics include:

- Accessible Hospital and Medical Facilities
- Accessible Playground Surfaces

For more information, go to [www.accessibilityonline.org](http://www.accessibilityonline.org).

## ADA Legal Webinar Series

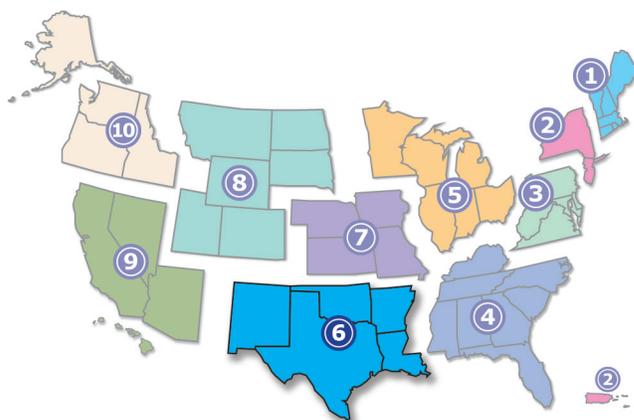
This program is designed for individuals who have a working knowledge of the ADA and are familiar with its basic elements. Sessions are intended to support continued learning and increase understanding of how the federal agencies and the courts are interpreting the law and subsequent regulations.

Legal experts synthesize the case law as it applies to different industries or specific elements of the law including employment, accessible technology and access to programs and services.

Continuing Legal Education Credits are available for attendees. For more information, go to <http://www.ada-audio.org/Webinar/ADALegal/>.

# Region 6 Southwest ADA Center

[www.southwestada.org](http://www.southwestada.org)



The Southwest ADA Center serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Region 6 is diverse in climate and demographics, with large populations of ethnic minorities and people with disabilities dispersed throughout the five states in both urban and rural settings. Six of the 20 largest American cities are in region 6, and the region is heavily invested in the health care, energy and tourism industries.

## Service Animals

The Southwest ADA Center's publication [Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals](#) was released online through the ADANN in September 2014. The guide explains the Federal civil rights of persons who use service animals and in what settings they are allowed. It has shown a significant rise in number of views online from 21,829 in October 2014 to 53,600 as of January 2015, and it ranks among the top most frequently downloaded ADA publications.

The release of this publication was particularly timely in Texas, which has seen an increase in the number of inquiries among consumers and business owners on rights of service animal users and determinations of service animal versus emotional support or comfort animals. This increase was attributed

to the passing of Texas House Bill 489, "Bootz's Law," which drew national attention to common issues faced by returning veterans who own service animals for assistance with symptoms related to post-traumatic stress disorder.

## Accessible Transportation

The Southwest ADA Center is providing policy guidance to the Houston Transportation Accessibility Task Force. After the emergence of Transportation Network Companies (TNC) in Houston, specifically Uber and Lyft, disability rights advocates voiced concerns that these TNCs would negatively impact

the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles-for-hire, since the TNCs do not have wheelchair accessible vehicles in their fleets. In response, the Task Force was



commissioned by the City of Houston to assess and recommend policies for implementing an accessible transportation system. The Task Force consists of representatives from the transportation sector as well as the disability rights community. Through on-going consultations and meetings, the Southwest ADA Center provides training to the Task Force. Topics include the minimum percentage of wheelchair accessible vehicles, denial of service to people with service animals, and driver training.

### **Expansion of Training for Those Who Serve & Protect**

Our center expanded training efforts to the City of Pasadena's Precinct 2 Citizens Police Academy. Bi-monthly trainings include both civilian and non-civilian audiences. The series focuses on issues including:

- wrongful arrest,
- dealing with persons who have mental health impairments, and
- effective communication.

Our center's partnership with the city on this program is relevant at a time when there has been extensive national attention on efforts to rebuild trust between local law enforcement agencies and their communities.

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*"The individuals who attend the weekly sessions are enthusiastic about learning the challenges law professionals encounter on a daily basis. It also allows them to understand the consequences of on-the-spot decisions. Most importantly, the academy serves as a vehicle to have an open dialogue between law enforcement and community members."*  
~Christopher Diaz, Constable, Precinct 2

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## **Strengthening Regional Partnerships**

### **Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services**

The Southwest ADA Center continues to work with the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) to ensure clients receive technical assistance, information and resources regarding their employment civil rights.

In October 2014 the center provided extensive training to vocational rehabilitation staff and their related providers at the state level at their Annual Employment and Rehabilitation Network Forum, which included staff from Laredo, McAllen, Harlingen, and Corpus Christi, Texas field offices. Additional trainings focusing on more specific employment-related topics were held in late 2015.

### **New Mexico Government Agencies**

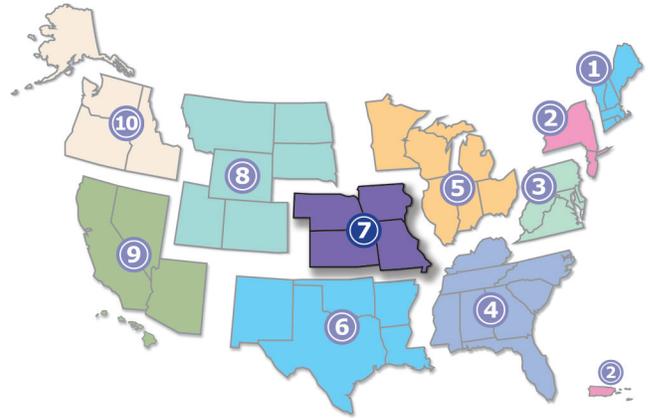
Our center continues to provide training and assistance for the New Mexico Taxation & Revenue Department (TRD) and other regional departments that fall under the same realm of service provision within New Mexico, including Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Gallup.

Trainings concentrate on specific topics, including Title II "Providing Quality Services to Customers with Disabilities" and "ADA Quick Tips" for Managers and Supervisors, which focuses on medical inquiries/examinations, hiring, and reasonable accommodation. Other trainings focus on giving customers with disabilities equal opportunity to benefit from TRD's services.

To date, 347 TRD staff received training with more expected as this is now a mandatory part of their training processes.

# Region 7 Great Plains ADA Center

[www.gpadacenter.org](http://www.gpadacenter.org)



The Great Plains ADA Center serves Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.

The Great Plains (GP) ADA Center is part of the University of Missouri School of Human Environmental Sciences Architectural Studies Department. Our service region stretches over 1,000 miles and consists primarily of rural communities, but also includes the major urban areas of St. Louis Metro, Kansas City Metro, Des Moines, Quad Cities Omaha, and Wichita.

The GP ADA Center emphasizes capacity-building and ADA implementation strategies. Two main focus areas of our service efforts are:

1. Working with communities and businesses to appoint ADA Coordinators and to ensure these Coordinators have access to adequate training, support, and resources, and
2. Providing trainings that bring together the disability community, state and local government officials, design community, business personnel, educators, etc.

## ADA Coordinator Training Certification Program

The ADA Coordinator Training Certification Program (ACTCP) certifies that participants have completed quality training, which provides the knowledge base and tools necessary to be effective in the role of an ADA Coordinator.

The ACTCP provides five major services.

- Establishes a knowledge base essential to the role of an ADA Coordinator.
- Provides professional support to members.

- Verifies quality sources of training and content.
- Verifies completions of training credits (40 required)
- Provides an examination to demonstrate mastery of content.

Upon completion of the program requirements, participants receive certification for three years. Currently, 708 participants are working toward certification requirements and 140 individuals have received certification.

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*"Everyone who holds the title of ADA Coordinator needs to have at least a base set of knowledge.... They will be taken more seriously. They will be empowered and they will be more apt to make changes."*

*~Liz Stanosheck, Former ADA Coordinator, Nebraska Dept. of Corrections*

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## National ADA Symposium

The National ADA Symposium is a four-day comprehensive conference on the ADA that has been held annually for the past 19 years. The conference offers 72 breakout sessions; preconference, keynote, and advanced discussion groups; and networking activities. Breakout sessions cover topics designed to meet the needs of the diverse group of professionals involved in ADA implementation.

Sessions are presented by nationally recognized experts, including representatives from the key agencies involved in ADA implementation, such as the EEOC, U.S. Access Board, and U.S. Departments of Justice, Labor and Education.

The ADA Symposium is attended by approximately 700 participants from across the United States. Attendees are involved in all areas of ADA implementation and include advocates, ADA coordinators, architects, business community, code officials, educators, employers, government officials, individuals with disabilities and service providers.

Evaluation data shows that the National ADA Symposium has increasing impact on local ADA implementation. Fully 100% of attendees (up from 96% in previous year) surveyed reported that they learned new information, strategies and skills that they use on the job and in their communities.

## CityArchRiver Project

As highlighted on Page 25, the GP ADA Center is assisting the City of St. Louis and the U.S. Park Service as it plans major renovation of the St. Louis Arch to make sure people with disabilities have access to all elements of this major project, including the arch, museum and educational centers.

## Outreach to Building Code Officials

Building code officials are critical to successful implementation of the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design in newly constructed buildings and renovations. As a member of the International Code Council (ICC), the GP ADA Center has successfully reached out to this target group through collaboration with the ICC that develops the International Building Code. These collaborative efforts have included working closely with ICC members to develop and present a "learning track" designed specifically for design officials at the National ADA Symposium. This track has become a feature at the

National ADA Symposium and is promoted by the ICC to the building community.

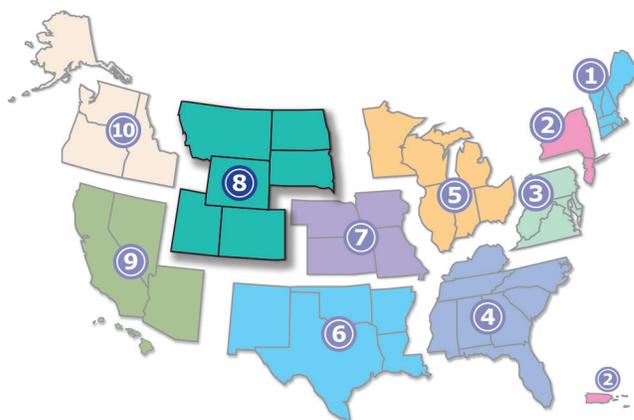
The GP ADA Center has also developed an in-depth training on the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessibility specifically for the building code officials. The course has been approved for ICC continuing education units and is promoted through the ICC to its members. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) recently approved these courses and promotes participation to its members as well.

This continuing collaborative effort has significantly increased the quality of accessibility training available to the design community at all levels. Support from the ICC and AIA has increased the number of design officials who have received in-depth training and validated that following accessibility codes and standards is professional practice.



# Region 8 Rocky Mountain ADA Center

[www.adainformation.org](http://www.adainformation.org)



The Rocky Mountain ADA Center serves Colorado, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

The Rocky Mountain ADA Center (RMADA) is operated by Meeting the Challenge, Inc (MTC) ([www.mtc-inc.com](http://www.mtc-inc.com)), a for-profit small business located in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Our focus during the past year has been to foster regional ADA implementation through our ADA Center services, as well as MTC fee service offerings. In addition to the core services of the ADA Center—technical assistance (TA), training, outreach, and materials dissemination—MTC offers customized extended services, such as:

- ADA policy and procedure reviews
- Transportation system accessibility consulting
- Facility accessibility audits
- Self-evaluations and transition plans
- Architectural plan reviews
- Park and recreation accessibility assessments

Some examples of the types of assistance we provided include helping create an ADA Coordinator position, assessing physical barriers, improving communication systems, training employees in disability awareness, and making recommendations to overcome ADA infractions. Additionally, RMADA is heavily involved with the ADA National Network and its projects.

Through these efforts, RMADA helps individuals, institutions and businesses understand their rights and responsibilities under the ADA, and support implementation of the ADA.

## ADA Symposium

In 2014, RMADA co-hosted the National ADA Symposium in Denver, Colorado. The National ADA Symposium boasts the largest assembly of presentations on ADA topics, delivered by some of the most renowned speakers in the country.

RMADA was proud to have helped make 2014 the most successful year yet of the Symposium, with a completely sold out crowd set by the expiration of the early registration period. Over 700 people came to Denver to learn more about the ADA.

## Access Reviews of Title II Program to Support ADA Implementation

Over the past year, MTC saw an increased desire by state and local government agencies to perform their Title II obligations under the ADA. Namely, Title II entities are seeking advice and direction on the best ways to perform self-evaluations and complete their transition plans.

Many times over the past year, RMADA received requests from Title II entities for assistance about their obligations under the ADA. At that point, RMADA provides the same exemplary quality of assistance it provides to all individuals and groups who contact us.

Now well informed, often these Title II entities are interested in taking the next steps towards actual implementation of the ADA by performing self-evaluations and creating transition plans based on their findings. This is where MTC has been able to step into the equation and assist Title II entities with their implementation efforts. The results have been no less than phenomenal. By creating collaborative relationships with these Title II entities, MTC has been able to become their partners in accessibility. MTC has helped countless Title II entities fully integrate the ADA in 2014.

After implementation efforts are realized by these Title II entities, RMADA continues to be involved with their work in ADA compliance by providing ongoing technical assistance and ADA training to various levels of personnel. RMADA is pleased to report that the full circle of technical assistance to implementation to lifetime relationships has been realized many times over in 2014.



## Law Enforcement Effective Communication Training

With the rise of national media exposure of law enforcement scenarios involving effective communication, RMADA is pleased to have addressed these issues head-on in our region.

In 2014, RMADA worked closely with two local organizations to educate law enforcement personnel who routinely interact with persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf/blind, specifically:

- Colorado Commission for the Deaf
- Hard of Hearing and Deaf Overcoming Violence through Education

Over the past twelve months, RMADA provided hands-on experience and information to various law enforcement personnel, enabling them to apply ADA information in day-to-day contacts. Additionally, RMADA's work with law enforcement personnel at some of the highest levels helped to effect policy changes ensuring that steps are in place before contact is made with people from the disability population.

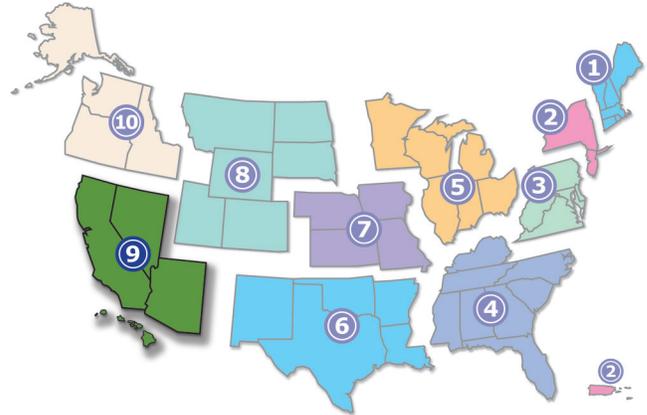
We are very proud to have been part of the team producing video vignettes involving real-life scenarios faced by and between law enforcement and deaf citizens. These video vignettes included

actual law enforcement personnel so that audiences could easier relate and identify with the scenarios being enacted.

RMADA has also been involved in training for tenured county and city staff, as well as to police academy students.

# Region 9 Pacific ADA Center

[www.adapacific.org](http://www.adapacific.org)



The Pacific ADA Center serves Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, and the Pacific Basin Territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

This region covers almost 1 million square miles of land mass and has a population of 50 million. In light of the large geographic area—as well as the ethnic, cultural and language diversity—the Pacific ADA Center’s staff and large network of affiliates play a significant role in reaching the region’s stakeholders.

## Emergency Preparedness

National, state, and local entities are increasingly planning emergency management and preparedness to handle disasters. Emergencies and disasters can be particularly concerning for people with disabilities. Successful outcomes for people with disabilities in disasters will depend on how inclusive the plans are.

The Pacific ADA Center is leading the efforts to disseminate information about emergency preparedness and management on behalf of the ADA National Network. A major part of this has been designing and hosting the “Emergency Management and Preparedness—Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities”

webinar series. The free webinars focus on key strategies and approaches at various levels (federal, state, and local) toward emergency management and preparedness and the inclusion of people with disabilities.

In October 2014, the Pacific ADA Center began a collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Office of Disability Inclusion and Coordination (ODIC). The collaboration resulted in a monthly webinar series as part of the “ADA National Network Learning Sessions.” Topics have included emergency preparedness and

management and “FEMA Promising Practices,” highlighting efforts across the country.



## Accessible Information Technology

Advances in technology are increasing at a rapid pace. To improve access to information and communication technology (ICT) required by the ADA, the Pacific ADA Center conducts in-person and web-based training on technology accessibility for public entities and businesses.

One example is Sonoma County, California which requested training on website accessibility. The county saw such value in the training that the request grew to a series of 15 trainings on web accessibility and creating accessible PDFs and Word documents to over 700 beginning, intermediate, and advanced staff throughout the county.

Other Accessible Information Technology training topics presented by the Pacific ADA Center include:

- Creating websites that comply with federal and state accessibility laws.
- iAccessibility which is accessibility on Apple mobile devices.
- Website accessible testing in small and big enterprises.
- Updates on accessible information communication technology laws.
- Creating accessible PDFs.



## Customized ADA Training

Throughout 2014, the Pacific ADA Center has provided in-depth ADA training to over 1,000 individuals at numerous large businesses and professional organizations.

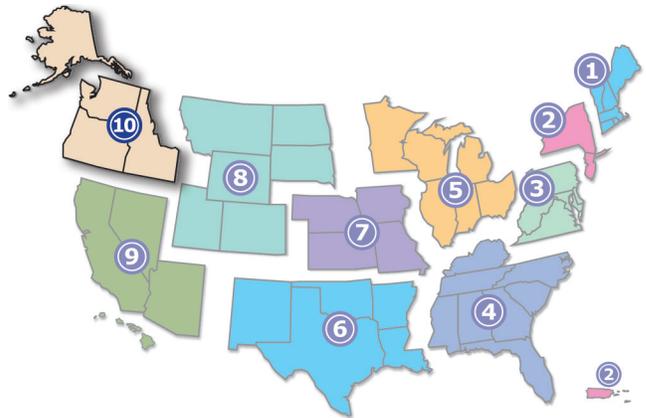
Topics explored in these trainings include reasonable accommodation in employment, disability awareness and etiquette, service animals, academic adjustments, effective communication, and the 2010 ADA Accessibility Standards.

Examples of the types of entities that received customized training include:

- The National Fire Protection Association.
- American Institute of Architects Chapters throughout Region 9.
- Two statewide associations that represent university supervisors of student nurses, professors, and ADA coordinators.
- J. Paul Getty Museum, which has a large campus with multiple buildings, hundreds of employees and volunteers, and the J. Paul Getty Foundation.
- Indian Wells Tennis Garden Center, host of major tennis tournaments from throughout the country.
- A vendor business that provides temporary concession employees to fairs and festivals.
- Individuals with disabilities, their family members, and disability professionals attending two Abilities Expo fairs.

# Region 10 Northwest ADA Center

[www.nwadacenter.org](http://www.nwadacenter.org)



The Northwest ADA Center serves Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

## International Travel for Students with Disabilities

For five decades, People to People Ambassador Programs, one of the nation's premier student traveling programs, has organized travel to every continent for young students (grades 5-12 and college).

But what about students who use a wheelchair, or have autism spectrum disorder? Could they travel? Should they travel? People to People trips go to countries untouched by the ADA and with far different cultural beliefs about disability than the U.S.

Since 2008, the NW ADA Center has provided People to People with up-to-date training on accessible travel.



## Accessible Health Care

In collaboration with the Center for Community Accessibility at Oregon Health Sciences University, NW ADA Center worked with two rural Oregon communities to improve health care for people with disabilities.

Over a nine-month period, Grants Pass and Pendleton, Oregon were supported in finding solutions to local barriers to health care. The process started with a city-wide Town Hall Meeting at which time citizens with disabilities were invited to share both their good and challenging experiences in accessing local health care. The results were then brought to a second city-wide Infrastructure Meeting in which members of the health care

*"Based on our efforts to improve how we make reasonable accommodations, over the past four years we have seen our enrollments for those needing accommodations flourish. That means many more students now have access to a life-changing experience, including those that may not have had the opportunity in the past."*

*~Mike Blowers, Senior Director of Health and Safety at People to People*

organizations, public transportation, city government, disability community, and media work at understanding the issues, and formed teams to address the issues they felt were most important to change.

Some issues have quick fixes, such as the intake forms that are not currently available in large print or alternative formats, and other issues are more complex.

Examples of issues being addressed include medical exam rooms that have tables inaccessible to someone using a wheelchair, scales that require the patient to stand, and poor signage.

In addition, one team is looking at potential patients being turned away from health services when they are unable to navigate the system and become frustrated.

Oregon recently instituted Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs), dividing the state into 15 regions that provide health care to approximately 90% of Oregon Health Plan enrollees. These organizations are tasked with coordinating health care for the geographic area. Our project, which not only identified barriers to accessing health care but also offered solutions, fits nicely into the mission of the CCOs.

The community engagement model used in this project has been used successfully by OHSU for 15 years to encourage communities to effect change for people with disabilities. Focus groups are planned at the end of the nine months to assess changes in the accessibility of health care in each community.



## Partnership with Washington State Department of Corrections

The manner in which a correction facility works with inmate offenders, job applications, and employees with disabilities is regulated under Title II of the ADA.

With over 10 million individuals detained in jails in the United States each year, the criminal justice agencies at state and local levels are reviewing and required to review their programs and services to ensure they comply with ADA laws.

The Washington Department of Corrections (WA DOC) embarked on a two-year Self Evaluation and Transition Plan to review its policies, procedures, programs, services, facilities, and activities to ensure that they are accessible to inmate offenders, offender visitors, job applicants, and employees with disabilities. WA DOC has 12 prison facilities,

16 work release facilities and 18,000 inmate offenders.

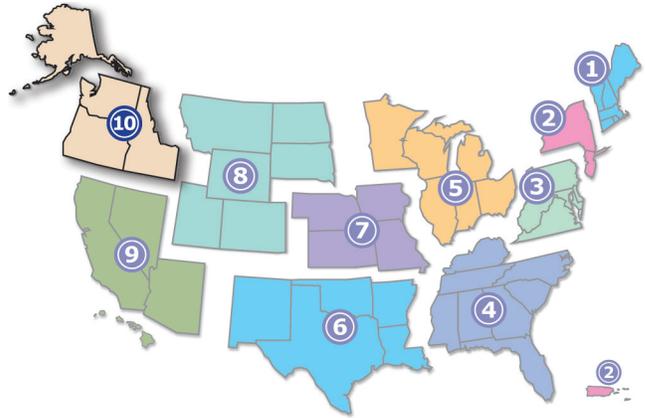
The Northwest ADA Center has partnered with the WA DOC for several years and acts as a consultant by reviewing policy compliance, surveying physical plant barriers that may impede accessibility or participation in programs or services, and evaluating access for all programs across the prison system.

The Northwest ADA Center trains DOC staff to conduct the facility and program surveys and provides advice as needed.

This project is a result of the long standing relationship between NW ADA and DOC and will serve as a model for other criminal justice systems in other states.

# ADA Knowledge Translation Center

[adakt.washington.edu](http://adakt.washington.edu)



The ADA Knowledge Center is based at the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington

The ADA Knowledge Translation Center (ADAKTC) functions as a platform for knowledge translation on topics related to the ADA. It does this by working to accomplish the following three goals:

1. Optimize efficiency and impact of the ADA National Network’s (ADANN) activities,
2. Increase awareness and use of ADA research findings to inform behavior, practices, or policies, and
3. Improve understanding of ADA stakeholders’ need for and receipt of ADA Network Services.

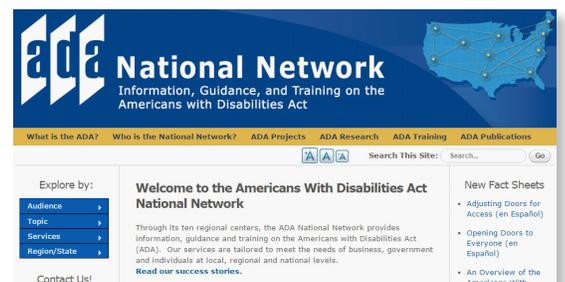
## Efficiency and Impact of the National Network

The ADAKTC develops centralized systems and conducts research to increase the efficiency and impact of the 10 regional ADA Centers that comprise the ADA National Network (ADANN). The ADAKTC meets this goal through four main activities: (1) the ADANN website, (2) committee and meeting support, (3) national product development, and (4) knowledge translation research.

### ADANN Website

The ADAKTC developed and supports the ADANN website ([adata.org](http://adata.org)), which is designed to highlight the work of the ADANN and connect individuals and organizations to its services. The website includes nationally relevant publications created by the ADANN, a national and local events calendar, a portal to training opportunities offered by the ADANN, a searchable database of high quality publications created by relevant organizations (e.g., the Department of Justice), a searchable database of frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the ADA, and profiles on ADA research conducted by the ADANN.

The website contains a newsfeed updated with current news and links to social media. It also includes monitoring and quality control features (feedback form, usage tracking).



## Committee and Meeting Support

The ADAKTC manages and supports committees to guide ADANN activities and increase collaboration between regional centers. Committees are in place in the following areas: Website, Outcomes Measurement System, and Knowledge Translation. Committees work to guide development of products, determine need for training, and develop standard operating protocols.

## National Product Development

The ADAKTC coordinates development of ADANN products (factsheets, booklets, FAQs). The Center, in collaboration with the regional centers, develops new materials or modifies existing ones for national dissemination. A protocol is in place for annual review and updating of these products to ensure relevance and accuracy. Starting in 2014, ADANN printable products have also been translated into Spanish. The ADAKTC also works with the regional centers to develop promotional materials.



## Knowledge Translation Research

The ADAKTC engages in research projects such as a project that investigates the work of ADANN technical assistance specialists to better understand how they address ADA information requests and to guide service delivery improvements. Another project involves an analysis of data collected in the Outcomes Measurement System to describe how ADANN services supports ADA implementation. The final project evaluates the role of the ADAKTC as a knowledge translation platform, in order to evaluate what structures support knowledge translation and what barriers impede translating policy (ADA laws) into implementation.

## Awareness and Use of ADA Research

Research about the implementation of the ADA is fragmented and difficult to find. The ADAKTC supports awareness and use of ADA research by conducting systematic reviews and organizing an ADA State of the Science Conference.

- The ADAKTC is engaged in a five-year project to systematically review and translate existing ADA research findings and identify knowledge gaps ([adata.org/national-ada-systematic-review](http://adata.org/national-ada-systematic-review)).
- In the last year of the project (2017), the ADAKTC will organize a State of the Science conference on research about ADA implementation. Researchers from a wide range of disciplines related to implementation of the ADA will be invited to participate and findings from the ADA systematic review process will be presented.

## Understanding Stakeholder's Needs

Another primary task of the ADAKTC has been to develop and implement centralized, efficient systems for collecting information about the work of the National Network to help understand the needs of ADA stakeholders (e.g., people with disabilities, business owners, architects, etc.) and to serve them better. Specifically, the ADAKTC developed and manages the Outcome Measurement System (OMS), which is used to collect information about the technical assistance, training, and other activities of the regional centers and supports implementation of an outcomes survey designed to measure ADA implementation. The ADAKTC also provides quarterly reports of OMS data to regional directors and NIDRR.

# ADA Implementation Highlights

## Renovating the St. Louis Arch Complex to Welcome Everyone

Scores of Americans visit this country's national parks and sites of interest every year. But for some, these visits can end up being an exercise in frustration as they try to navigate the accessibility barriers inherent in these historic sites. With this in mind, a community of forward-thinking citizens in St. Louis has been working together to make their landmarks more welcoming to everyone.

CityArchRiver 2015 is a comprehensive renovation project that seeks to transform the Arch of St. Louis—the city's iconic towering landmark—along with surrounding parks and museums into a more welcoming and accessible environment for visitors of all abilities. Because advocates of universal design were involved from the early stages of the process, the project has evolved into a remarkable example of how a space can meet the needs of everyone.

During the early stages of planning, David Newburger, the ADA coordinator of the city of St. Louis, was invited by Mayor Francis Slay to join the project's Technical Advisory Group. The group included an array of experts from the area, all of whom were able to interact with each of the designer candidates initially being considered for the project.

Newburger kept this momentum going by advocating for forming a committee of citizens that would work to incorporate the needs of people with disabilities and offer their input and advice on the designers' different ideas. This committee

was composed of people with disabilities who also had specific knowledge about how designs should be made universally accessible. A diverse array of disabilities and needs were represented on the committee, including people with tetraplegia (quadriplegia) and paraplegia, vision and hearing impairments, and psychiatric and developmental disabilities.

Chuck Graham, who served on the committee on behalf of the Great Plains ADA Center, said that the inclusion of the disability community during the beginning stages is what set the whole endeavor apart from the rest.

"It's been no small undertaking," Graham said, noting that this was a collaborative effort involving city, state, and federal entities that dealt with multiple buildings, parks, transit systems, business, and landmarks. The process was a monthly affair where the committee regularly interacted with the designers, often in ways that emphasized the very need for such a thorough process.

"This whole thing would not have happened had I not been able to obtain the support of the visionaries who are leading the project," Newburger said, which came from "a combination of support from the Mayor's office, relationship building, perseverance, making all communications diplomatic, and supporting the visionaries' personal goals."

To read the full story, go to [adata.org/st-louis-arch](http://adata.org/st-louis-arch).



## Community Collaboration Ensures Access to Art for All

In the heart of Nashville's thriving arts scene lies the Frist Center for the Visual Arts, whose guiding vision is to "inspire people through art to look at their world in new ways." Realizing this vision meant that designers and staff needed to imagine and plan the Center in new ways so it would be a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible space for all.

When the founders of the Frist Foundation, one of Tennessee's larger philanthropic organizations, first envisioned the new Visual Arts Center that would open in 2001, they hoped to develop a world-class venue for the arts, as well as a collaborative undertaking bringing in the entire community. The founders exerted great effort to ensure the new Center would be available to "all," a vision that guided planning and design from the beginning.

The Southeast ADA Center became involved in the process of ensuring accessibility in September 2000 when the Frist Center for the Visual Arts contacted the Tennessee Disability Coalition (TDC) to help them make the new Center accessible to people with disabilities. The TDC is one of the Southeast ADA Center's eight State ADA Affiliates. Each State Affiliate receives extensive and ongoing training, information and technical assistance from the Southeast ADA Center so that all of the State Affiliates are fully competent and prepared to provide on-site ADA information, training and technical assistance.

Active participation of disability advocates early on in the planning and design process coupled with the Frist Center's ongoing commitment to full accessibility has created an attraction that serves the widest audience possible. The trust and collaboration between the Frist Center and the

Tennessee Disability Center as a local point of contact for information and technical assistance about the ADA has grown and developed through the years. As a result, the Frist Center has been able to take small steps that have yielded great results over time.

Through this early collaboration with the Southeast ADA Center's Tennessee State Affiliate, the Frist Center has become a shining example of how to create a space that is accessible to all.



The Frist Center for the Visual Arts

"We would not be the institution we are without the incredible relationship we have with the Tennessee Disability Coalition and Donna DeStefano who, with TDC and other advocates, have been real partners on this tremendously worthwhile journey," said Ellen Pryor, Director of Communications for the Frist Center.

"From the outset," wrote Director of Education Anne Henderson on the occasion of the opening of the Frist Center, "the founders of the Frist Center for the Visual Arts have said publicly and privately that the Frist Center exists to serve all of the people of this community.

To read the full story, go to [adata.org/Frist-center](http://adata.org/Frist-center)



# 2015 Profile

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