

# ADA Update

# A Primer for Small Businesses

*Based on the  
“ADA Guide for Small Businesses”  
US Department of Justice, June 1999*

**COMMISSION ON DISABILITY**

*The City of Easthampton*

*September 2017*

# Overview

The purpose of this guide is to educate small business owners in Easthampton on how to accommodate individuals with disabilities in their place of business.

Architectural, communication, programmatic, and policy barriers prevent people from participating fully in society. People with disabilities cannot assume they can use common public places, such as stores, banks, offices, and restaurants, or participate in ordinary activities, such as working, getting an education, visiting friends, and attending community events. Most non-disabled people take these freedoms for granted.

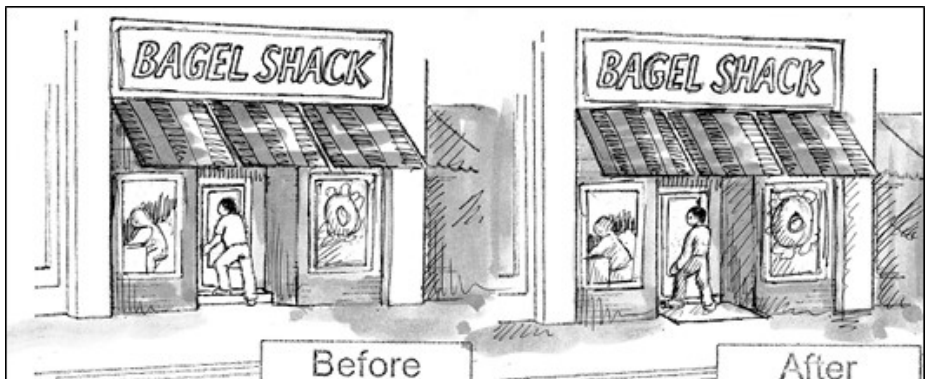
Accessibility means much more than ramps for wheelchair access. People with all types of physical, sensory, cognitive and other disabilities must be ensured equal access to facilities, services, and programs. People with disabilities must not be discriminated against through structural barriers, unequal policies and practices, or inaccessible means of communication and dissemination of information.

*(Source: Massachusetts Office of Disability)*

# ADA Information and Resources

## Tax Breaks

The IRS Code includes a Disabled Access Credit (Section 44) for businesses with 30 or fewer full-time employees or with total revenues of \$1 million or less in the previous tax year. Eligible expenses may include the cost of undertaking barrier removal and alterations to improve accessibility or making material available in accessible formats.



Section 190 of the IRS Code provides a tax deduction for businesses of all sizes for costs incurred in removing architectural barriers in existing facilities or alterations. The maximum deduction is \$15,000.

## Information & Resources

“Reaching Out to Customers” explains the ADA’s requirements for businesses in a short 10-lesson online course. ([www.ada.gov/reachingout/intro1.htm](http://www.ada.gov/reachingout/intro1.htm))

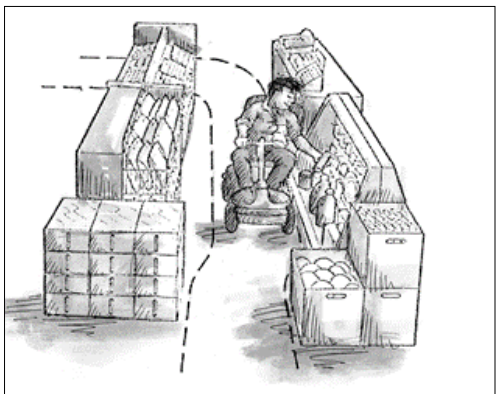
**A lowered counter and clear floor spaces are critical components of an accessible service counter.**



**Retrieving out of reach items and describing items for sale are ways to provide assistance to customers with disabilities.**



**An accessible route allows customers using mobility devices to access items for sale.**





**Service animals provide many types of assistance for people with disabilities.**



**Devices categorized as wheelchairs must be permitted.**



**Exchanges of written notes may be appropriate for casual interactions.**

**Complex transactions  
will likely require  
more formal means of  
communication, like a  
sign language  
interpreter.**



**Businesses must  
answer calls placed  
through the telephone  
relay service.**

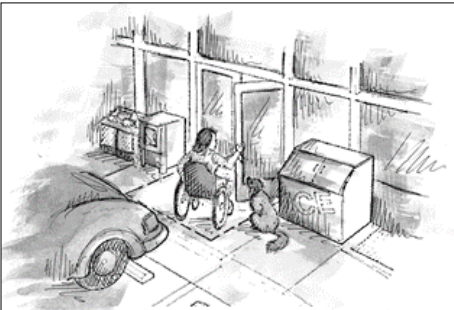


**Reading a menu to a  
customer who is blind  
is one way to provide  
effective  
communication.**





**Snow or other debris in accessible parking spaces and access aisles must be removed.**



**Accessible entrances must be provided.**



**When barrier removal is not possible, alternatives such as curbside service, should be provided.**

## **Mission Statement**

It is the Mission of the Commission on Disability, in conjunction with the Americans with Disabilities Act, to bring Easthampton into compliance with all rules and regulations relating to disability access within our community.

The Commission will work with the City and the business sector for accommodations that will be a benefit to all people.

The Commission will review proposals and recommend changes it feels necessary for the well-being of disabled persons within the community.

The Commission will work to increase awareness and community cooperation.

The Commission on Disability will serve as a resource for information pertaining to the American with Disabilities Act.

## **Contact Us**

Easthampton Commission on Disability

50 Payson Ave.

Easthampton, MA 01027

*Phone: 413-529-1406*

*Email: [allanj@easthampton.org](mailto:allanj@easthampton.org)*