

National Network of ADA Centers

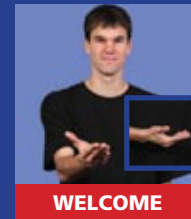
www.adata.org

This brochure is not intended to provide legal guidance. For more information about the Americans with Disabilities Act and the hospitality industry, contact your regional DBTAC (Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center).

Supported by NIDRR grant #H133A060085.

Access to Restaurants

Ensuring full access to your restaurant is one great way to expand your customer base. Individuals with disabilities control \$176 billion in discretionary income. Millions of people with disabilities dine at restaurants regularly, and they often come with family members, friends, and colleagues. Older patrons and aging baby boomers also benefit from your restaurant's accessibility features.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
(800) 949-4232 V/TTY

Disability Etiquette Tips

- Speak directly to the individual you are addressing, not to a companion or sign language interpreter. Never shout at a person. Speak in a normal tone of voice.
- When you meet someone with a vision disability, always identify yourself and others who may be with you. Be sure to let the individual know when you are leaving.
- Listen attentively when talking with people who have difficulty speaking, and wait for them to finish. If necessary, ask questions that require short answers or a nod of the head. Never pretend to understand; instead, repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond.
- Service animals are working animals, not pets. Do not pet, feed or distract them.
- Avoid words/phrases such as handicapped, victim, confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound, cripple, suffers from, retarded, mute, or dumb.

Accessibility Symbols



(800) 949-4232 V/TTY

Practical Tips: Serving Customers with Disabilities

- Train restaurant staff in disability etiquette.
- Make sure your staff is aware of your restaurant's accessibility and is trained to respond accurately to inquiries about accessibility. Have a list of your restaurant's accessible features available for staff and identify those features on your website.
- Be prepared to utilize a variety of tools and methods to communicate with people with disabilities, including providing menus on cassette tape, Braille menus, picture menus, and training staff to read menus aloud or exchange notes with customers.
- Welcome service animals into your establishment. Service animals assist people with all types of disabilities, including individuals who are blind, deaf, have epilepsy, use wheelchairs, and others.
- Ensure accessible parking spots are clearly marked and maintained. Some people with disabilities choose to patronize a restaurant based on whether they can easily find accessible parking.
- Improve access by ensuring there is a clear path – wide enough for a wheelchair – from the parking lot to all areas of the restaurant, including seating areas, restrooms, self-service counters, and emergency exits.
- Make sure food service counters and everything in self-service areas (e.g., salad bars, buffets, condiment bars, soda machines) can be reached from a seated position.
- If your restaurant has a website, make sure it is accessible and includes alt tags (text describing graphics) and/or a link to a text only version of your site.

- If making your restaurant structurally accessible is impossible, provide alternatives such as curbside service and home delivery for people with disabilities who cannot enter the restaurant.
- Remember, people with disabilities are your customers!
- Utilize available federal tax incentives to make your restaurant more accessible and to hire employees with disabilities. Many states also offer tax incentives.
- To learn more about serving customers with disabilities, utilize this U.S. Department of Justice online training: www.ada.gov/reachingout/intro1.htm
- Get training from a knowledgeable resource, like the DBTAC National Network of ADA Centers; (800) 949-4232 V / TTY or www.adata.org for more information.

Examples of Areas to Assess for Accessibility

- Parking lot, entrance, reception area
- Restrooms
- Outdoor areas
- Elevators, hallways, aisles
- Counters, bars, self-service areas
- Seating, tables
- Private dining rooms
- Communication (TTY, Braille, etc.)
- Emergency exits

All of these areas have specific accessibility requirements. Your regional DBTAC (Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center) is available to discuss these requirements, provide training, and answer your other ADA questions.