



TEXAS MUNICIPAL LAW BULLETIN™

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ACCOMODATING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: How Can You Help with Meetings & Communications?

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a city council, planning and zoning commission, etc. must generally make its meetings accessible to persons with disabilities. The ADA is a federal civil rights law that guarantees people with disabilities the same opportunities to participate in mainstream American activities as those without disabilities. In the context of state and local governments, the ADA ensures that people with disabilities have access to programs, activities, and services.

Cities must ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with individuals without disabilities. This means that a public entity, such as a municipality, might be required to provide auxiliary aids and services to accommodate a person with a disability. Auxiliary aids and services include:*

Examples for the hearing impaired

- Qualified Interpreters
- Notetakers
- Written Materials
- Videotext Displays

Examples for the visually impaired

- Qualified Readers
- Audio Recordings
- Large Print Materials

Examples for the speech impaired

- Computer Terminals, (e.g. using a word processor)
- Communication Boards

**Please note that this is not an exhaustive list.*

If a person with a disability requests an accommodation, your office must take appropriate steps to comply. A common request is interpretation services for an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing. Interpreters must be qualified, meaning that they must be able to convey information effectively, accurately, and impartially—through the use of any necessary specialized vocabulary. Certification is not required.

Our firm can assist in drafting an accommodation policy that fits your needs. Contact our office for more information or email Info@TexasMunicipalLawyers.com.



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