

Looking for suggestions for Improving Community Accessibility?

Do you have a copy of the *ADA Handbook* or some other official ADA publication that gives explicit guidelines for specific accessibility issues? That's been a real help to me---it's important for me to be right about what the ADA expects. Know the rules. I copy the pages that explain how the regulations should be applied and start with that. I always begin by locating the owner of the property and then make an appointment, calmly explain the predicament because his property is not in ADA compliance, and ask him to make the changes I show him. Almost always the changes get made.

I've had to deal with this city a couple of times, so I realize bureaucracies sometimes take a little more persistence than, say, a small restaurant might. But I outlasted them, and they always came through in the end. Most of the difficulties I encountered had more to do with a lack of understanding of how indispensable the ADA is for some of us than with stubbornness. I always found people to be quite reasonable---at least after a while.

For years I worked with the name of our post-polio support group behind me. But if one doesn't have this and doesn't wish to venture on alone, around here I'd go to the Mayor's Committee on Disabilities or to the Governor's Commission on Disability, or to the League of Human Dignity for help. I'm sorry I'm not familiar with what organizations you have there for support, but I know you'll find them or look at Resources in this area of PHI's website.

Rarely, even after we made all the right moves, someone would refuse to make a required change. In such a case, it was necessary to file an ADA complaint. We were always very careful to know what we were talking about, and as a result, the process always turned out well. Nancy Baldwin Carter