

# INCREASING AGENCY ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Domestic Violence Agency Self-Assessment Guide

Revised 2004



Cathy Hoog, Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services,  
for the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic  
Violence

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## HOW TO USE THIS SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE

"No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land,  
or opened a new doorway for the human spirit."

Helen Keller (1880-1968), American author and educator who was Deaf-blind

Providing domestic violence services to people with disabilities challenges our thinking about the experience of abuse and our strategies for reform. We can be proud of Washington State and its excellent policies against abuse. We are doing enough, it would seem, but it is not enough for people with disabilities. There aren't many practical tools available for domestic violence programs for improving accessibility. The Coalition developed this tool specifically for you to increase your program's ability to work with people with disabilities. By increasing our capacity to work with victims who have a disability, we engage in creative and resourceful advocacy with every individual who seeks justice and safety. This self-assessment guide is intended to assist domestic violence programs in evaluating their accessibility to victims with disabilities in their community.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires programs to be accessible to people with disabilities. Domestic violence programs should eliminate physical barriers to access.

Communications by program staff with people with disabilities should be at least as effective as communication with those who do not have disabilities. Policies and practices should be reviewed to eliminate unnecessary barriers to accessing services. The best way to comply with the requirements of the ADA is to do a thorough self-assessment, and develop a prioritized plan for making the program accessible to all persons with disabilities.

It is important to remember that people with disabilities are first of all *individuals!* Meaning that they each have their own ideas about what accommodations are preferable. You should have a goal of making things flexible to accommodate a variety of possible requests. It is impossible to make blanket changes that will make your agency accessible to all people with disabilities. You will have to remain open to changes that are necessary based on individual preference and need.

This document is intended solely as a guide and is not a statement of your legal responsibilities or rights. Completion of the steps identified in the guide does not necessarily mean you have met the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, other state or federal laws or regulations.

Agencies can receive additional help by contacting the ADA Technical Assistance Centers at 1-800-949-4ADA. This toll-free number will connect you to your nearest Disability and Business Regional Technical Assistance Center. Regional centers may be able to provide the information or refer the agency to other experts. Additionally, the agency can contact a local Independent Living Center (See Resources section of this guide) and arrange for a site visit, complete an evaluation or provide consultation. Inquire about costs, as there may be fees for services when using this resource.

This guide discusses common problem areas and provides some suggestions for improving accessibility. The more barriers removed from the agency, the more options a victim with a disability will have for reaching safety. Current research has found that while abuse victims with disabilities may follow the same known patterns as abuse victims without disabilities, victims with

disabilities were found to stay much longer in an abusive relationship.<sup>1</sup> This same research cites a lack of accessible options available to victims with disabilities. Every single aspect addressed by an agency will bring the program farther along to building a pathway to safety for all victims.

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<sup>1</sup> “Preventing and Intervening with Violence Against Children and Adults with Disabilities,” A white paper for the conference, Arlington, VA, May 2002. Prepared by M. Nose, R., Hughes, H. Taylor and C. Holand, Center for Research on Women with Disabilities, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Baylor College of Medicine, 3440 Richmond, Suite B, Houston, TX 77046, mnosed@bcm.tmc.edu.

## Getting Started:

- Make a copy of the guide.
- Obtain a copy of site's floor plan or make a sketch to help visualize which pathways should be accessible.
- Carry a tape measure, clipboard and a 60-inch circle of paper.
- Tour the entire site and conduct interviews to answer the questions in the guide.
- Sit down with decision makers and develop answers for addressing the "no" responses.
- Discuss your solutions and findings with an agency or person with disabilities who is familiar with access issues.
- When no immediate resolution is available, develop a contingency plan stating how the agency will accommodate persons with disabilities in the interim.
- Develop a written plan that is circulated at all levels of the agency and program detailing the immediate and long-range goals for improving accessibility.
- Prioritize deadlines, develop budget estimates, and decide who will be responsible for carrying out the plan.
- The board of directors should assist in developing the agency's budget items included in the plan.
- The plan should be monitored regularly to measure progress and implementation of the action steps.
- Keep records of your planning and accomplishments for three years.

## Directions:

After answering each "yes," "no," or "in progress" to each question, the box below should be completed. The box will help the agency develop short- and long-range goals for increasing accessibility. The meanings of the terms in the boxes are as follows:

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

Immediate steps: Think about the steps you could make "tomorrow" if a person with a disability asks for accommodation. Document the needed action steps.

Long-term goals: Document the agency's agreed-upon solution for each accommodation issue.

Assigned to: Record the initials of the person who will be responsible to carry out the action steps. This person could be a board member, a staff person, or a volunteer.

Budget: Record the projected costs of the proposed action steps.

Due: Record completion date.

Use the guide as a problem-solving tool. Copy and distribute the guide throughout your agency.

## INCREASING AWARENESS OF STAFF

This section focuses on staff awareness and training about the diverse experiences of people with disabilities who are also victims of domestic violence. There are many ways to increase staff knowledge about people with disabilities, and receive feedback from people with disabilities who use the program services.

1. Is your program actively working with organizations or groups serving people with disabilities?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

2. Is there an agency/person with a disability familiar with access issues to work with you on this self-evaluation and plan?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

3. Is someone in your agency designated to oversee compliance with laws like the ADA regarding accommodation of people with disabilities?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

4. Are there people with disabilities working in different levels of your agency?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

5. Has your staff training addressed the dual dynamics of abuse and the experiences of people with disabilities?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

Increasing Awareness of Staff

6. Has your program staff had training by an agency or person with A disability who is familiar with access issues to increase comfort level, skills, awareness of rights and responsibilities, and general knowledge for working with victims with disabilities?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

## IDEAS AND QUICK SOLUTIONS

- Figuring out how many victims with a disability use program services is one way to measure the agency's connection to the disability advocacy community. Twenty percent of the United States population (43 million people) has a disability that affects the performance of their daily activities.
- Begin to dialogue and build alliances by attending a local disability networking meeting or calling a local agency that works with people with disabilities.
- Establishing alliances between local domestic violence agencies and disability agencies (that are by or for people with disabilities) fosters the development of a shared vision for working with victims with disabilities.

## GETTING TO THE AGENCY

People with disabilities should be able to travel to approach the building, and enter as freely as everyone else. At least one route of travel should be both safe and accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities.

1. Is there a clear path of travel to your building that is clearly marked and does not use stairs?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

2. Is the route monitored regularly to ensure it is still usable and has not been blocked?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

3. Is the slope of travel to your building no more than 1:12 (i.e., no more than a one inch rise in height for each foot of distance to travel)?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

4. Where there are sidewalks and curbs -- are the curb cuts leading to your building entry clear of any blockages?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

5. Where there are parking lots, does your program have parking spaces for people with disabilities near the main building entrance?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

Getting to the Agency

6. Is your doorway entrance at least 32 inches wide with no more than a ½ inch threshold between the outside and inside of the building?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

7. Are your building entry door handles easy to grasp and open (preferably a lever handle needing no more than eight pounds of pressure to operate)?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

8. If your county has bus service or para-transit options for transporting people, does your staff know how to access the services?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

9. If your agency provides transportation, does the program have a van with a lift or the ability to use one?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

## IDEAS AND QUICK SOLUTIONS

- Change the entrance to an accessible and level part of the building.
- Temporarily build a short ramp over the curb until a curb cut is permanently installed.
- Install non-slip surface materials, including paint with grit.
- Installing offset hinges can widen a doorway.
- When immediate access is unavailable, install a call button with a sign stating "Ring for Assistance," in large, clear print.
- Reconfigure and repaint your parking lot to provide accessible spaces.
- Locate an accessible van and arrange to use it (i.e., for crisis intervention or appointments).
- Identify the closest, accessible bus routes and directions to the agency.

## GETTING AROUND INSIDE THE BUILDING

This section focuses on how people with disabilities will reach all the parts of the building. Ideally, the layout of the building should allow people with disabilities to be as independent as possible in all the common areas (e.g., kitchen, laundry room, meeting areas, children’s play area, advocate’s office). A continuous corridor three feet wide and six to eight feet high, and free of hazards and abrupt changes in level, should connect all common areas of your program. This pathway should lead from the entry point of the property and through all the common areas.

1. Is the path of travel to all common areas in your building free of obstructions and at least 36 inches wide?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

2. Are all objects on the walls protruding no more than four inches into the walkway?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

3. Does your agency and staff systematically check for access each time things are moved around or remodeled?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

4. Is the floor hard and non-slip?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

5. Are all the doors to the common areas 32 inches wide?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

6. Do the doors have lever handles and open easily?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

7. Do all the rooms have less than a ½ inch rise threshold between the corridor and entry?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

8. Is there a wide and unobstructed path between desks, tables, beds and other furniture groupings?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

9. Does part of the corridor allow for turn-around room (at least five-foot circles)?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

10. Are the elevator controls 48 inches from the floor?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

11. Are tactile markings placed on the outside and inside elevator buttons?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

12. Does your elevator have audible signals and a turning area of at least 60 inches?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

13. Is your phone located in an unobstructed area with clear space of at least 30 inches by 48 inches in front of it and no more than 48 inches above the floor?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

14. Are your agency's phones push-button for dialing?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

15. Is there a clear path of travel to the bathroom?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

16. Is your bathroom large enough to turn around in (at least 51 inches)?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

17. Are grab handles installed in the toilet stalls?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

18. Are your sinks at least 30 inches high and clear underneath (so a person using a wheelchair can get their knees under the sink and reach the handles) and are the pipes under the sink covered with insulating material to prevent burns?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

19. Are your soap dispensers, towels, and other needed items no more than 48 inches from the floor?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

20. Are all your alarm systems audible and equipped with flashing lights? Is the emergency evacuation plan posted in an accessible area?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

21. Has the functionality of your emergency evacuation plan been reviewed by an individual or agency that is familiar with the needs and access issues for people with differing abilities (such as cognitive, sensory, visual, Deaf and mobility disabilities)?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

22. Are all the machines and appliance controls located in your common areas low enough and within reach (48 inches from the floor)?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

23. Are all signs inside your building: a) located 60 inches from the floor, b) placed next to the latch side of the door, c) made with raised characters between 5/8 inch and 2 inches tall, and d) in Braille?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

## IDEAS AND QUICK SOLUTIONS

- While answering the guide, it is helpful to have the building floor plans. If plans are not available, use graph paper to sketch the layout of all interior and exterior spaces used by the organization. Make notes on the sketch or plan while completing the guide.
- Determine if the program's funding sources have monies available for barrier removal. If not, research grants and programs to fund your barrier removal plan.
- Here are some simple suggestions to address interior building accessibility:
  - Tilt down the top of a mirror that is too high so it can be seen from a lower angle
  - To test a door, try opening it with one hand, held in a fist
  - Retrofit doorknobs with add-on lever extensions
  - Use an inexpensive force meter or a fish scale to measure the force required to open a door
  - Place something on the floor under any objects that are protruding from the walls
  - Provide cup dispensers for fountains with spouts that are too high
  - A pre-cut paper or fabric 60-inch diameter circle makes it easy to determine if there is an adequate turning radius for wheelchairs
- If the installation of a permanent ramp is not quickly achievable, a portable ramp should have railings and a stable non-slip surface. The slope of the portable ramp should not exceed one to twelve. Only trained staff should assist persons in safely using the portable ramp. Having an evaluation and plan are critical action steps that demonstrate the agency's progress and good faith efforts to achieve accessibility and comply with laws. Plans should be kept for three years and include: the persons consulted, the external and internal areas reviewed, the identified problems and any modifications or changes.

## USING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM SERVICES

Ideally, domestic violence programs should provide people with disabilities the same services and access to all common areas available to all others. Ask yourself, if I had a mobility, visual, sensory, or cognitive disability, what program elements would function as a barrier to accessing services?

1. Has your program worked with domestic violence victims with disabilities?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

2. Do you keep statistics on the number of victims with disabilities who use the program's services?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

3. Do you ask everyone if they need any accommodations during screening and intake?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

4. Do you have a system in place that informs all appropriate staff of accommodation requests and your response plan?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

5. Do you have a resident plan that allows for 24-hour access to medications and medical equipment?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

6. Can residents with restricted or special diets obtain access to food 24 hours a day?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

7. Do any of your shelter's televisions have closed-captioned text, and does your staff know how to turn the captioning option on and off?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

8. Do you have one accessible bedroom in the shelter and transitional housing program?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

9. If not, do you have a plan for housing a victim who needs an accessible space (keep in mind that services should be provided in an integrated setting and not further isolate a victim with a disability)?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

10. Do you have a plan to provide personal attendant services and independent living support to victims with disabilities in your shelter?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

11. Do you have a plan for locating assisted listening devices, real-time captioning, and readers?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

12. Does your program make policy exceptions to allow accommodations such as service dogs, interpreters and personal care assistants in your confidential shelter?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

13. Do all appropriate staff know how to send and receive a TTY call?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

14. Does your crisis line have a TTY and a person trained to use it at all times?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

15. Are your staff and volunteers trained on using the Washington State Relay system (especially staff or volunteers who are on-call)?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

16. Are the residents' phones hearing aid compatible and is a TTY available with the same privacy as other phones?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

17. Does your program have a plan for accessing qualified interpreters 24 hours a day?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

18. Does your program have a plan for accessing state-certified interpreters for legal proceedings?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

19. Are your program forms, handouts, and educational information available in alternate formats?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

20. Does your program definition of “intimate partners” include personal care assistants?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

21. Can your program work with male victims with disabilities?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

22. Can your program work with a resident in a group home or nursing home facility?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

## IDEAS AND QUICK SOLUTIONS

- The Rural Housing Service works with a wide variety of public and non-profit organizations to provide housing options to communities throughout rural America. Organizations eligible to apply for RHS funds include local and state governmental entities; non-profit groups, such as community development organizations; associations, private corporations, and cooperatives operating on a not-for-profit basis; and Federally recognized Native American groups. Website: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wa/>. State office: USDA - Rural Development, 1835 Black Lake Blvd. SW, Suite B, Olympia, WA 98512-5715; Phone: (360) 704-7740, Fax: (360) 704-7742, TTY: (360) 704-7760.
- Alternate formats can be created from current print materials by enlargement on a copier or forms can be printed from the computer in a larger font.
- Someone can read materials onto a cassette tape.
- High marks, large-font "presto" label makers and stick-on felt squares may be used to make tactile markings on equipment.
- There is a wide array of inexpensive equipment available for improving access that can be found on the Internet and at many community centers.
- If your shelter does not have 24-hour staffing, think about a medication locker or other secure system accessible only by the adult needing emergency access to medication.
- Arrange to use an accessible meeting room in a nearby building for events and support groups.
- Alternative methods for offering shelter, such as accessible motel/hotel rooms nearby should be considered only after all options for removing barriers have been found not to be readily achievable.
- Personal attendants should be able to provide the following support: Cooking, house cleaning, shopping, accompaniment, clerical skills (filing, writing, etc.), reading, lifting and transferring, feeding, bathing, dressing, bowel and bladder care, and paramedical support.
- The Job Accommodation Network has compiled extensive ideas for accommodating individuals with disabilities. For additional information and ideas on accommodation for many specific disabilities, see their website at <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/media/ideas.html#dis>.

## GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT

Helping the community become aware of your program's accessibility will send victims a clear message that they are welcome in your program.

1. Are there pictures of people with disabilities included in any of your materials?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

2. Do you include information about your accessibility in your presentations, publications, announcements, invitations, letterhead, brochures, and business cards?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

3. Do you seek out captioned videos for educational presentations?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

4. Are your program's materials and events available in alternate formats such as: audiotape, large print, Braille, computer disk, and website (if applicable)?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

5. Do you provide interpreters for your community events?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

6. Do you do outreach in places used or frequented by people with disabilities?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

<b>Action</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Due</b>
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

## IDEAS AND QUICK SOLUTIONS

- Prepare a press release for the local media about what you have accomplished.
- Connect with your local disability services and subscribe to and advertise in their newsletters and websites.
- Avoid creating "special" brochures. Instead, integrate access accommodation information into the materials you already produce.

## REVIEWING EXISTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. Do any of your existing policies inadvertently exclude a person with a disability from your program or make your job harder when you try to help?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

Reviewing Existing Policies and Procedures

2. Do you have a process to request a revision or exception to your policies, procedures or practices to accommodate an individual person's disability?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

3. Have you reviewed your employment policies to be sure that they do not limit applicants or employees in a way that adversely affects their opportunities because of a disability? The review should include the following policies: recruiting, hiring, promotion, grievance, termination, and layoff policies.

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

Reviewing Existing Policies and Procedures

4. Have you reviewed your program to make sure your daily practices and procedures do not have the effect of discrimination on the basis of a disability (for example, holding employment interviews in a non-accessible building or refusing to provide an interpreter)?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

5. At your program, are staff and volunteers given an opportunity to ask about or make a request for accommodations?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

Reviewing Existing Policies and Procedures

6. At your program, are the people utilizing your services given an opportunity to ask about or make a request for accommodations?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

7. Do your safety planning forms include questions about support and resources for victims with varied abilities?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

Reviewing Existing Policies and Procedures

8. Have you determined the process you will use to decide when reasonable accommodation would cause undue hardship for your program? Do you have a process to document that decision?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

9. Has your staff been trained and updated on your program's policies and everyday practical procedures regarding people with disabilities?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

10. Have you posted equal opportunity notices in an accessible format and advertised all position openings in diverse print media resources and varied locations?

YES       NO       IN PROGRESS

Action	Assigned to	Budget	Due
Immediate steps:			
Long-term goals:			

## IDEAS AND QUICK SOLUTIONS

- Obtain a copy of the WSCADV manual *Enough and yet not Enough: An Educational Resource Manual on Domestic Violence Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities in Washington State*, principal author, Cathy Hoog, June 2001. Contact Leigh Hofheimer at 206, 389-2515, ext. 104.
- Even if your agency is not easily made accessible, having a completed self-evaluation and a written plan of action will prove your good faith efforts to comply. Plans should be kept for three years and list the persons consulted, the areas considered, the problems identified and any modifications or changes.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this self-assessment guide. By reading through the guide, you have demonstrated your commitment to improving your program's services to victims with disabilities. You may now find yourself proud of your program's progress, excited by the possibilities of expanding your program, or overwhelmed by the amount of work to be done. Support is available both in your community and at the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Use this guide to develop a plan of action for your program to improve services to victims with disabilities. This guide includes creative solutions to remove obstacles to victim safety. Access does not have to be complicated, expensive or accomplished all at once. Start with what is feasible and affordable. You will find as you make connections that there are resources available to help you figure out what is best for your program.

Statistics show that victims with disabilities stay in abusive relationships much longer than average and believe they have fewer options to reach safety. Every action you take will offer more options for safety to victims with disabilities.

## RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION ON INCREASING ACCESS

### Center For Independence

325 E. Pioneer Ave

Puyallup, WA 98372-

(253) 435-8490

(253) 845-3174 TTY

(253) 435-8590 FAX

Web: <http://www.geocities.com/centerind/index.html>

Email: [cfi@goodsamhealth.org](mailto:cfi@goodsamhealth.org)

### Coalition of Responsible Disabled

612 North Maple Street

Spokane, WA 99201-

(509) 326-6355 V/TTY

(509) 327-2420 FAX

### Disability Resource Center

607 Southeast Everett Mall Way, #6C

Everett, WA 98208-

(425) 347-5768 V/TTY

(425) 710-0767 FAX

(800) 315-3583

Web: <http://www.wa-ilsc.org/>

Email: [ilsc@richpoor.com](mailto:ilsc@richpoor.com)

### Disability Resource Network

16315 NE 87th Street, # B-3

Redmond, WA 98052-

(425) 558-0993 V/TTY

(425) 558-4773 FAX

(800) 216-3335

Email: [dnetredmond@yahoo.com](mailto:dnetredmond@yahoo.com)

### Central Washington Disability Resources

422 North Pine Street

Ellensburg, WA 98926

(509) 962-9620 V/TTY

(509) 933-1571 FAX

(800) 240-5978

Email: [cwdr@televar.com](mailto:cwdr@televar.com)

Disability Resources of Southwest Washington  
5501 NE 109<sup>th</sup> Court, Suite N  
Vancouver, WA 98662  
(360) 694-6790  
(360) 882-1324 FAX  
Email: susandar2003@yahoo.com

Tacoma Area Coalition of Individuals with Disabilities  
6315 South 19<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tacoma, WA 98466-6217  
(253) 565-9000  
(253) 565-5445 TTY  
(253) 565-5578 FAX  
Email: tacid@tacid.org

Washington Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities  
4649 Sunnyside North, Suite 100  
Seattle, WA 98103  
(206) 545-7055  
(206) 632-3456 TTY  
(206) 545-7059 FAX  
(866) 545-7055  
Web: <http://www.wccd.org>  
Email: [info@wccd.org](mailto:info@wccd.org)

## RESOURCES ON FEDERAL DISABILITY RIGHTS LAWS<sup>2</sup>

The Northwest ADA & IT Center is the federally designated Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC) for Region X, serving Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Periodic *Information Bulletins* can keep you updated on current topics related to the Americans with Disabilities Act and accessible information technology.

Resources can also be found through [www.disabilityinfo.gov](http://www.disabilityinfo.gov), a one-stop interagency web portal for people with disabilities, their families, employers, service providers, and others.

The Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) requires access to certain facilities designed, built, altered, or leased with federal funds according to established design standards. These standards are enforced by the Access Board through the investigation of complaints. Technical assistance on the design requirements is also available from the Access Board.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government services, transportation, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and telecommunications. Unlike the ABA, the ADA's coverage is not tied to the presence of federal funding. Various agencies provide information or guidance on different sections of the law. Information on all sections is available through a network of regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs) sponsored by the federal government.

ADA Accessibility Guidelines, and Electronic & Information Technology Standards: Access Board  
[www.access-board.gov](http://www.access-board.gov), (800) 872-2253 (v), (800) 993-2822 (TTY)

Employment: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
[www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov), (800) 669-4000 (v), (800) 669-6820 (TTY)

Government Services and Public Accommodations: Department of Justice  
[www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov), (800) 514-0301 (v), (800) 514-0383 (TTY)

Transportation: Federal Transit Administration  
[www.fta.dot.gov](http://www.fta.dot.gov), (888) 446-4511 (V/Relay)

Telecommunication Relay Services: Federal Communication Commission  
[www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov), (888) 225-5322 (v), (888) 835-5322 (TTY)

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensures access to programs and activities that are federally funded. It also protects the rights of federal employees with disabilities. Federal agencies are responsible for enforcing requirements as they apply to their own programs, services, and employment practices. The law also requires electronic and information technology procured by federal agencies to be accessible according to standards issued by the Access Board.

Programs and Activities: Each federal agency is responsible for ensuring that the programs and activities it funds meet the access requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. To

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<sup>2</sup> This information was excerpted from *Information Bulletin #15*, Northwest ADA & IT Center, January 6, 2003. To obtain more information or to be added to their mailing list, please contact [nwada@ohsu.edu](mailto:nwada@ohsu.edu) or call (800) 949-4232.

find an agency's 504 contact, call the Access Board or see this website link:  
[www.access-board.gov/enforcement/504.htm](http://www.access-board.gov/enforcement/504.htm).

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of disability, as well as race, color, gender, and religion. It covers housing in the public and private sectors. Under the law, new multi-family housing must be able to be adapted for accessibility according to established guidelines.

Department of Housing and Urban Development  
[www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov), (800) 669-9777 (v), (800) 927-9275 (TTY).

The Telecommunications Act requires telecommunications products and services to be accessible according to guidelines developed by the Access Board, where readily achievable. It covers a broad range of products, including telephones, cellular phones, pagers, and fax machines. The Federal Communications Commission enforces requirements of the law.

Federal Communications Commission  
[www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov), (888) 225-5322 (v), (888) 835-5322 (TTY).

The Air Carrier Access Act prohibits discriminatory treatment of people with disabilities in air travel. Regulations issued by the Department of Transportation under the Act cover a range of issues, including boarding assistance and access features in newly built aircraft.

Aviation Consumer Protection Division, Department of Transportation  
[www.dot.gov/airconsumer](http://www.dot.gov/airconsumer), (866) 266-1368 (v), (866) 754-4368 (TTY)

The Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act ensures access to polling places used in federal elections and requires states to make available registration and voting aids, such as instructions in large type. Also, the Help America Vote Act of 2002 addresses access to polling places and voting systems. The Election Administration Commission, a new entity to be established under the law, will implement the act's reforms.)

Voting Section, Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice  
[www.usdoj.gov/crt](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt), (800) 253-3931 (V/TTY)

## REFERENCES

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, "Access Survey & Planning Guide," *Open Minds, Open Doors: Technical assistance manual assisting domestic violence service providers to become physically and attitudinally accessible to women with disabilities*. Denver, CO, 1996.

U.S. Department of Justice, Americans with Disabilities Act, Information and Technical Assistance publications, December 2002, [www.ada.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm](http://www.ada.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm).