

What is the ADA? (Americans with Disabilities Act)

The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** is a civil rights law that protects people in all areas of public life from being discriminated against based on their disability. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

What is a disability?

ADA defines **disability** as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. This includes people who:

- Have a record of a disability, even if they do not currently have a disability.
- Do not have a disability but are regarded as having such a disability.
- 19 out of 100 (19%) Americans are living with a disability -that is 57 million people.

What are the regulations and standards for public places that protect people with disabilities?

- **Title I: Employment**
 - Prohibits agencies with 15 or more employees to discriminate based on disability in hiring, firing, promotions, training, and other privileges of employment
 - Requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations that will enable an applicant or employee with a disability to perform essential job functions. Examples of reasonable accommodations include making existing facilities accessible, job restructuring, or a part-time or modified work schedule.

- **Title II: State and Local Government**
 - Prohibits public entities such as state and local government agencies from discriminating against people based on disability
 - Requires public places to make their programs, services and activities accessible
 - Covers public transportation
- **Title III: Public Accommodations**
 - Sets building standards for new construction and requires old buildings to provide more accessibility features
 - Requires reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures, and effective communication for people with various disabilities
 - Requires that facilities take steps to effectively communicate with customers that have visual, hearing, or speech deficits
- **Title IV: Telecommunications**
 - Requires telephone and internet companies to provide a system that allows individuals with hearing or speech impairments to be able to communicate over the telephone
 - Requires federally funded public service announcements to have closed captioning

Key takeaways

ADA lists four priorities for accessibility in state and local government facilities:

1. Accessible approach and entrance
2. Access to goods and services
3. Access to public restrooms
4. Access to other items such as water fountains and public telephones

Where can I learn more?

- The ADA National Network: <https://adata.org/learn-about-ada>
- U.S. ADA Website: <https://www.ada.gov>
- U.S. Department of Labor “Americans with Disabilities Act”:
<https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/ada>
- Michigan Disability Resources:
<https://www.michigan.gov/disabilityresources/>

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by Michigan Medicine and for which Michigan Medicine does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Patient Education by [Michigan Medicine](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 06/2019