



# Developmental Disability **Advocates**

Connecting Individuals with Resources  
IN JEFFERSON COUNTY - SINCE 1978

## ACCESSIBILITY PLAN



# FY20

## **Purpose of Accessibility Plan**

Developmental Disability Advocates promote the identification and removal of architectural, attitudinal, transportation, communication, employment, financial, and other identified barriers to persons receiving services. Reasonable accommodations are provided and corrections implemented as the organization has available resources. The purpose of this plan is to identify accessibility barriers and to implement a plan and timeline for corrections. Developmental Disability Advocates adheres to our vision to see individuals with intellectual / developmental disabilities live a life of their choice and to be fully included in the community.

Information for barriers was collected through the following methods:

- Employee requests for reasonable accommodations
- Satisfaction surveys
- Maintenance requests
- Public comments
- Individuals served comments (aside from the satisfaction survey)
- Participation in community events, meetings with providers, etc.
- Agency Needs Assessment
- TOGETHER stakeholder group meeting minutes
- Quarterly building inspections
- Board Member evaluation of buildings owned by Developmental Disability Advocates
- Insurance provider inspections

## **Practice**

Developmental Disability Advocates promotes the process of removing architectural, attitudinal, communication, employment and financial barriers, hiring people with disabilities, and increasing the public awareness of the challenges and achievements of people with disabilities. Specifically, this policy involves the following:

1. Developmental Disability Advocates Board of Directors and Executive Director, resolves that barrier-free designs are incorporated into all of its buildings, facilities, and plan sites to which the Missouri State building code applies – to assure that they are accessible to, and usable by, people with disabilities. Also, any alterations, structural repairs, or additions to existing Developmental Disability Advocates facilities shall be created to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.
2. Developmental Disability Advocates, as an agency, will have open input from employees with disabilities about any work site modifications or additional vocational equipment aids necessary to accommodate their disability.
3. The Board of Developmental Disability Advocates resolves that the agency will always be an equal opportunity employer and recognizes its duty to provide equal opportunity to all qualified person without regard to disability, religion, sex, national origins race, color, gender identification, or genetic statement.
4. Developmental Disability Advocates will take part in community functions which promote the awareness of intellectual / developmental disabilities and emphasize the accomplishments of people with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

## **AREA OVERVIEWS**

### **Transportation**

Developmental Disability Advocates is committed to the identification of transportation needs and transportation barriers of persons trying to reach our organization or participate in community activities. Developmental Disability Advocates works with referring agents and participants to secure alternative transportation resources when appropriate. Persons may utilize public (Jeffco Express), disability-related (JC Transit, OATS, Disability Resource Association), or private transportation services (cab service, UBER, LYFT, etc.). Jefferson County encompasses 664 square miles of towns/cities and rural areas which makes affordable and accessible transportation challenging.

### **Communication**

Developmental Disability Advocates is committed to the identification and removal of communication barriers to promote opportunity for persons seeking services. The agency guidebook is available in various media methods to best accommodate the communication need of the individual (upon request). These include verbal, written, audio, and large print.

Other resources utilized by Developmental Disability Advocates to enhance communications include:

1. Missouri Relay Service assists in communication with persons with hearing impairments.
2. Signs in Braille and / or pictograms (see architectural section).
3. Interpreters or translators as needed.

### **Attitudinal**

Developmental Disability Advocates looks at attitudinal barriers both within our organization and within the community. This includes language and terminology used in materials and communication. Developmental Disability Advocates also solicits participant and community input and feedback regarding service coordination to determine the effectiveness of treating individuals with dignity and respect.

Developmental Disability Advocates ensures identification of attitudinal barriers to promote opportunities to people with disabilities or barriers to employment, accessing generic services, and becoming involved in their community. Developmental Disability Advocates actively promotes awareness in the community regarding the opportunities and success of people with disabilities. Specific examples include:

1. Participating in press releases and public service announcements regarding programs available to people with disabilities and success stories about people with disabilities.
2. Being active in professional, business and civic organizations to heighten awareness regarding people with disabilities.

Ongoing training and in services are offered for participants, family members, employees, civic organizations, schools, state agencies and other service providers. As an agency, we offer assistance in providing information in regards to ADA issues.

Developmental Disability Advocates collaborates with other agencies in Jefferson County and the St. Louis Region to keep legislatures informed regarding laws, program changes, population statistics, supports needed for people with developmental disabilities. TOGETHER (Developmental Disability Advocates advisory group) and Developmental Disability Advocates is active in hosting legislative tours, trainings, meetings, and State Capital visits. Developmental Disability Advocates continues to be active in providing information via newspapers, newsletters, social media and radio/television interviews.

### **Environmental**

Developmental Disability Advocates strives to ensure access to services by providing accommodations to environmental barriers. Service Coordination provides home, community or worksite visits to participants, who do not have access to services at our facilities due to region, work schedules, family responsibilities or a disability.

1. Service Coordination and Administrative offices are checked on a quarterly basis for safety issues and any barriers.
2. All facilities meet or exceed the ADA requirements.
3. Work environments are to be barrier free and request for accommodations can be formally made as outlined in the policy. It is the agencies expectation to pursue all reasonable accommodations for successful employment.

### **Financial**

Developmental Disability Advocates is committed to ensuring that participants have access to services. Financial barriers may include insufficient funding for services. Developmental Disability Advocates works at the legislative level for increased funds and actively participates appropriate grant opportunities.

### **Employment**

Developmental Disability Advocates complies with ADA practices and will not discriminate against employment practices including job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, and other terms, conditions and privileges of employment including recruitment, advertising, tenure, layoff, leave, fringe benefits, and all other employment-related activities. Developmental Disability Advocates will not discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the employment position.

### **Architectural**

Developmental Disability Advocates ensures access to buildings and facilities for people with disabilities. Developmental Disability Advocates is committed to removing architectural barriers, as resources become available. All new construction will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as required by local authorities.

### **Technology**

Developmental Disability Advocates assesses needs of individuals we support in respect to the use of technology to enhance their lives, increase their independence and link them to activities associated with the general public. Many individuals use Facebook, email, Twitter, etc. (social media). Developmental Disability Advocates continues to enhance our presence on social media to provide current and relevant information to all stakeholders.

**FY '20 Outcomes (time period: 7/1/2019 – 6/30/2020)**

Area	Actions	Time Line
Transportation	Provide passes to a minimum of 5 individuals to learn how to utilize JC Transit.	By 6/30/2020
Communication	Offer training on the use of People First language to service coordinator.	By 6/30/2020
Attitudinal	Present information on intellectual / developmental disabilities to a minimum of 5 organizations.	By 6/30/2020
Environmental	Environmental accessible adaptations will be completed for a minimum of ten (10) individuals served as measured by funding provided to Disability Resource Association and through the MO Medicaid Waiver program.	By 6/30/2020
Financial	Identify a date / time specific to a tax increase (strategic plan).	TBD
Employment	Present a minimum of 3 trainings specific to employment and the effect on government benefits.	By 6/30/2020
Architectural	Rectify a minimum of 5 deficiencies identified in the ADA assessment completed in fiscal year '19.	By 6/30/2020
Technology	A minimum of five (5) individuals will utilize remote technology as identified by service authorizations.	By 6/30/2020

\* Progress in all areas will be presented in the quarterly service coordination report. The Director of Service Coordination will be responsible for the oversight / reporting of this plan.