

# Accessibility Planning Process

Here are five basic steps your organization can take to begin meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in your community.

## 1) **Identify an Accessibility Coordinator within your group who will:**

- Serve as an access resource person, gathering resource materials and attending workshops on access issues.
- Assist in educating staff, board and volunteers about disability services and access issues.
- Develop regular, ongoing review mechanisms for your organization, including consultation on new policies, programs and services.
- Evaluate the accessibility of your agency's facilities, programs and services and make recommendations for needed improvements. Work with staff and board to ensure that access accommodations and services are 1) provided in all activities undertaken and 2) included in the budget.
- Assist in developing your group's outreach to people in the community who have disabilities.

2) **Appoint a Group of Advisors** willing to help your organization plan for accessibility. This might include members of your group and/or audience. Include people with disabilities; do not hesitate to include more than one individual from any particular disability group—people with similar disabilities do not always share the same opinions or needs. This group will help you evaluate the accessibility of your programs, facilities and services and make recommendations for improvements to your staff and board of directors or other managing body.

3) **Conduct an Accessibility Audit** use the following accessibility surveys to assess your organization's policies, programs, services and physical space(s). This assessment will serve as a baseline from which to measure all future access improvements.

4) **Develop an Organizational Policy** that formally states your organization's commitment to access for people with disabilities. This policy should be approved by your board and communicated and embraced at all levels of the organization. It will serve as your organization's public statement of intent to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. It will also serve as your internal guide to making program and budget decisions.

5) **Develop an Accessibility Plan** to resolve the access issues identified in your audit. A realistic plan will include first steps, long-range implementation strategies, a timeline and methods for ongoing review.