



Access New England

A publication of the New England ADA Center

September 2012

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Stay Connected:



Main Streets Tour Improves Access Awareness in Montpelier

This summer, in celebration of the ADA's 22nd year, Vermont's capitol city conducted an access tour of its main streets and shopping district for community leaders. Members of Montpelier's City Council, School Board, local business association, and the current and previous mayors, as well as the city's fire chief and public works director participated.

Some used wheelchairs, walkers, and crutches while others navigated the streets wearing goggles simulating vision impairments with aid of a white cane or a guide person from the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. New auditory signals at State and Main streets were put to the test and eventually raised after the group determined the locator tone was too low to be heard over traffic.

The high-spirited group was led by a local business owner and life-long resident AND wheelchair-user who had a total blast leading his old teacher, now school board member, and the new mayor through his favorite trouble spots. This tour was a result of recent collaboration between the municipal ADA committee and local business organization, Montpelier Alive, to improve access awareness in the City.



Local hot spot, and Montpelier Alive member, Three Penny Taproom added wheelchair access, including an automatic door, with its recent renovation.

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A project of the
Institute for Human Centered Design

Job Opening: New England ADA Center Seeks ADA Trainer, Information and Outreach Specialist

The Institute for Human Centered Design's (IHCD) New England ADA Center (www.NewEnglandADA.org) is seeking professional to provide trainings, technical assistance, capacity building, and outreach on all of the Titles of the ADA. The applicant for this position is knowledgeable in all Titles (Title I Employment, Title II State and Local Government, and Title III Public Accommodations) of the ADA including the 1991 and 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, as well as Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and New England states' comparable disability rights laws concerning housing, employment, public accommodations and architectural access. [Read the full job description.](#)



Vermont High School Students Learn About Navigating Barriers with a Disability

Vermont Center for Independent Living and Vermont Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired teamed up with Vermont Agency of Transportation this summer to expose high school students to the realities of barriers to navigating with a disability.

Two dozen National Summer Transportation Institute (NSTI) students spent an afternoon navigating around University of Vermont campus in wheelchairs* and used white canes while wearing goggles simulating visual impairments. The NSTI students are exploring careers in transportation design and engineering and expressed appreciation for gaining new perspectives and having big fun at the same time.

*Power wheelchairs were generously supplied by The Medical Store of Williston Vermont.



Left to right: EEOC Commissioner Victoria A. Lipnic, Ana Julian, Commissioner Chai Feldblum, Oce Harrison and Kathy Gips. Ms. Julian, Ms. Harrison and Ms. Gips are from the New England ADA Center.

Reasonable Accommodation and the American with Disabilities Act Seminar

Commissioners Chai Feldblum and Victoria A. Lipnic from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) held a training seminar in Boston on September 18. The Commissioners and other speakers from various organizations focused on the central subject of reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities under the

Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA).

The Commissioners discussed topics such as essential job functions, job descriptions; the fundamentals of reasonable accommodation; leave, modified schedules and telecommuting as reasonable accommodations. Their presentation took up the morning portion of a full-day session. The keynote speaker featured the Mayor of Boston, Thomas Menino. The afternoon program included more in-depth sessions with local presenters on the interplay of the ADA, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and Worker's Compensation; Essential Functions, Qualification Standards and Production Standards; and ADAAA Accommodation Mysteries Solved and Disability Etiquette.

In the audience were lawyers, human rights commissioners from New England states, human resource personnel and ADA coordinators from higher education.

The EEOC Commissioners are training in cities around the United States and we highly recommend this training! [Read more about upcoming training sessions.](#)



New England ADA Center Participates in Boston Stand Down 2012 Providing Services to Hundreds of Area Military Veterans

On August 24, the New England ADA Center took part in Boston Stand Down 2012 in Dorchester, Massachusetts. Hundreds of Veterans from within and outside Massachusetts attended the event which was sponsored by VA Boston Healthcare System and Volunteers of America.

Male and female, young and not so young homeless Veterans or those at risk for becoming homeless, came by to take advantage of numerous services and to gain access to free food, clothing and sleeping bags. The New England ADA Center addressed the needs of veterans with both visible and less obvious disability issues, providing information about how the ADA applies to veterans in areas such as housing, education and employment. [Read more about the 2012 Boston Stand Down.](#)



Options Counseling Assists Massachusetts Individuals in Need of Long Term Care Support

Options counseling assists individuals to make an informed choice about the services and settings that best meet their long term support needs, encouraging the widest possible use of community-based options to allow people to live as independently as possible in the setting of their choice.

Individuals and caregivers receive information about a range of long term care support options, such as personal care services, transportation, and medication management and are informed of the resources to help pay for services. The services:

- Are free of charge
- Are for adults with a disability and seniors age 60+
- Are available by telephone, in-person or email
- Can be provided at home, at an agency, in a hospital, rehabilitation or nursing facility
- Provide unbiased information and decision-support about long term care services
- Can be provided in one sitting or over a series of meetings
- Ensure that the individual retains control over the process
- Help determine next steps to take

Options counseling is administered by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and is a service of the Aging and Disability Resources Consortia (ADRC). [Read more about options Counseling.](#)





Census Bureau Releases Updated Disability Statistics

The U.S. Census Bureau has released updated statistics on the population of people with disabilities in the U.S. According to the new figures, 56.7 Americans (18.7% of the population) have some type of disability. Of this number, an estimated 38.3 million (12.6%) have a disability characterized as "severe."

The findings, which are contained in a study based on the Bureau's 2010 Survey of Income and Program Participation, also provide estimates on the prevalence of different types of disability:

- vision impairment: 8.1 million (3.3%)
- hearing impairment: 7.6% (3.1%)
- difficulty walking or climbing stairs: 30.6 million (12.6%), including people who use wheelchairs (3.6 million) and canes, crutches, or walkers (11.6 million)
- difficulty lifting or grasping: 19.9 million (8.2%)
- cognitive, mental, or emotional impairments: 15.2 million (6.3%)

The Bureau's report, "[Americans with Disabilities: 2010](#)," also covers distribution by age and gender and provides estimates on various economic factors, including employment rate, income levels, program participation, and health insurance coverage.



US Department of Labor Announces Disability Employment Application Challenge Winners

The U.S. Department of Labor has announced the winners of the disability employment application challenge. \$10,000 in prizes were awarded for 3 innovative apps helping to improve employment opportunities and outcomes for people with disabilities.

The contest, launched in May, encouraged third-party developers to build tools to help improve employment opportunities and outcomes for people with disabilities using publicly available resources and employment data. The announcement was first made by Labor Secretary Hilda L. Solis during a special Labor Day Twitter chat on Thursday, Aug. 30.

The "[Access Jobs](#)" application received the \$5,000 Innovation Award by implementing techniques such as responsive design to deliver an accessible job search experience across all platforms.

The "[VoisPal-Speak as You Think!](#)" application received the \$3,000 People's Choice Award through a public voting process.

The "[AccDC: Accelerated Dynamic Content](#)" application received the \$2,000 Above and Beyond Accessibility Award. [Read more about the contest and the award winners!](#)



Disability Employment Statistics

Credible, consistent data on the employment status of people with disabilities is critical to shaping disability employment policy. Reflecting this, in 2008, after several years of research and testing, the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) sponsored the addition of new questions to the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS) to gauge the employment status of people with disabilities. Prior to this time, many conflicting numbers were available from various sources, all using different definitions of disability and methods of data collection.

This historic achievement was the outcome of close collaboration with DOL's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), several other Federal agencies, and disability experts and advocates. January 2009 marked the first month for which official government data on disability employment were available. Today, these data are updated monthly, providing citizens and policymakers with reliable and

accurate information on a topic of importance to America's workforce and economy.

ODEP will be providing monthly the unemployment rate as calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Current Disability Employment Statistics - August, 2012:

- Unemployment rate for people with disabilities 13.9%
- Unemployment rate for people without disabilities 8.0%

[Learn more on the ODEP web site.](#)



Section 508 Report to the President and Congress: Accessibility of Federal Electronic and Information Technology Examined

The goal of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act is for federal agencies to ensure that employees with disabilities and members of the public with disabilities have access to information that is comparable to the access available to others.

Section 508 requires federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities when they develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology. This report examines the state of federal agencies' compliance with Section 508. [Read the full report.](#)

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