



## What is the ADA?

- Americans with Disabilities Act: Prohibits discrimination, intentional and unintentional against people with disabilities.
- March 15, 2011: Title II issued, requires Illinois agencies to be certain that new construction, alterations, and additions fully comply with ADA requirements.

## 5 Step Approach



- 1) Designate a staff member to be in charge of receiving complaints and solving problems.
- 2) Stay educated on the changing regulations, standards, and codes that implement federal and state accessibility requirements.
- 3) Designate a staff member to become a Certified ADA Coordinator. This will help expose staff to smart practices in facility access, policies, and program supports for people with disabilities.
- 4) Create and access an Inclusion Advisory Council. Find citizens with disabilities in your community that reflect your own beliefs. Once created, use them and invite their advice.
- 5) Ask for help! Educate yourself on this issue, utilize your certified staff and attend trainings, workshops, conferences.

## Common Myths:



- 1) Because there is adaptive equipment, it means the facility is compliant with the ADA.**
  - a. This isn't necessarily the case. Most places have equipment installed, but when it is measured, it does not comply with ADA guidelines (e.g. pool or wheelchair lifts).
- 2) The ADA requires equal access to facilities only.**
  - a. In addition to facility access, the ADA requires equal access to all programs and services provided. Access goes beyond "getting in the front door".
- 3) The ADA requires businesses to spend lots of money to make their existing facilities accessible.**
  - a. The ADA recognizes that trying to change barriers in existing buildings can be very difficult and expensive, especially if the building is old. Some inexpensive ways to add more accessibility to a building include: adding a grab bar to a bathroom stall, lowering the paper towel dispenser, and/or rearranging furniture.
- 4) The ADA expects barriers to be removed overnight.**
  - a. Facilities are only expected to make changes as they can. If removing a barrier would be detrimental to the financial wellbeing of a business, it is recommended that the business create a long term financial plan to prepare for the removal of the barrier.
- 5) The ADA requires businesses to hire people with disabilities.**
  - a. Businesses are not required to hire people with disabilities, but are required to look at the essential functions of that job to see if they can be adapted, or done with a reasonable accommodation. If an essential job function is to read a manual and master the content, a person with a visual impairment is able to do the job using braille, or audio tapes.