

Alachua County Advisory Boards Annual Report

Date: June 18, 2024

Board/Committee Name: Citizens Disability Advisory Board

Members: Christie King (Chair), Erin Field, Jenna Gonzalez, Jodi Jainchill, Grayson Osbourne, Latecia Richards, Jaclyn Trenteseaux

Staff Support: Chandra Hampton, Melissa Patterson, Jill Weinsier, Bob Swain, Deputy County Attorney

Board Liaison: Jacqueline Chung, Equal Opportunity Manager

Brief History of Committee: The Citizens Disability Advisory Committee was established in 1984 to assist the County in implementing its responsibilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Members are appointed by the County Manager. The committee assists the Equal Opportunity Manager/ADA Coordinator in reviewing County programs, services, and facilities to ensure equal opportunity/equal access for persons with disabilities.

Requests for Reasonable Accommodations under the ADA

The Equal Opportunity Office (EO) receives accommodation requests from citizens, job applicants and employees with disabilities. Requests for reasonable accommodations are handled on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given to the individual's preferred auxiliary aid or service. Examples of accommodations or assistance provided:

- Sign-Language Interpreters.
- CART Reporter (Computer-Aided Real Time Transcription).
- Promoting 711 Florida Relay Service on County websites and business cards.
- Documents printed in Braille or large font.
- Extended time for test-taking and assessments during the hiring process for individuals with dyslexia or other learning disabilities.
- Modifying job duties/how work is performed to accommodate employees with disabilities or medical restrictions.
- Responding to citizen concerns regarding accessibility of local housing/business establishments.

Staff Training

Internal training for staff on the Americans with Disabilities Act (Title I: Employment & Title II: State and Local Government) was held on June 12-13, 2024. (See flyer attached). Over 500 County employees participated in the training and learned about their rights under the ADA and their responsibilities to the public, to ensure that County programs and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities. In-person training is also supplemented by mandatory online compliance training. Employees are required to complete online training on Equal Opportunity topics, including the ADA, upon hire and every two years thereafter.

Public Education/Outreach

July is Disability Awareness Month, observing the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act which was signed on July 26, 1990. The Equal Opportunity Office runs a series of public service announcements on disability rights on Channel 12 during the month of July. The committee helps to plan a community outreach event each year to raise awareness of the ADA and the rights of individuals with disabilities to fully participate in public and civic life. Last year, we held a very successful Disability Awareness Expo on July 25, 2023 at the MLK Center, with 33 diverse agencies and businesses showcasing their products and services. The event was well received by attendees, with some stating that they learned about valuable resources in the community that they were unaware of.

The public is invited to attend this year's Expo scheduled on July 24, 2024 at the MLK Center.

Goals & Objectives for FY25:

- Conduct ADA walk-through reviews of newly constructed or recently renovated County facilities to identify any potential access concerns.
- Assist the Equal Opportunity Office in conducting an ADA Self-Assessment of County programs and services. A consultant will be hired to evaluate the survey responses and report on the findings. Project to be completed in FY25.
- Plan a public education/outreach event for July 2025.