



DP EXPRESS



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The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990, by President George H.W. Bush. The ADA is one of America's most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination and guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the mainstream of American life -- to enjoy employment opportunities, to purchase goods and services, and to participate in State and local government programs and services. Modeled after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin – and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 -- the ADA is an "equal opportunity" law for people with disabilities.

To be protected by the ADA, one must have a disability, which is defined by the ADA as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived

by others as having such an impairment. The ADA does not specifically name all of the impairments that are covered.

32 years after signing the ADA into law, there is more work to be done. Still, there has been progress within our society to become accessible to people with disabilities. It's the matter of educating in areas that cater to the public the importance of being accessible to all people and of course it's the law. It took many advocates to get the ADA at the point to be signed into law and still we need to continuously advocate in order for the ADA to be enforced.

DisAbility Partners invites everyone to post on their social media sites how the ADA had impacted your life. Also, we would like to hear your stories and if you would like us to share your story in our next edition of the DP Express, let us know. You can email khollingsworth@disabilitypartners.org or call us at 828-298-1977.



ASK THE ADA COORDINATOR

Reminder: DisAbility Partners is taking your ADA questions to ask the ADA Coordinator. Questions and the answers will be posted in each edition of the DP Express. Submissions will be posted anonymously. Email your questions to khollingsworth@disabilitypartners.org or call 828-298-1977.

WHAT IS A CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING?

Centers for Independent Living such as DisAbility Partners are consumer controlled, community-based, nonresidential private non-profit agencies that are designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities, and provide an array of independent living services.

The Independent Living (IL) movement started in the early 70s when the Berkeley Center for Independent Living in California was founded by Ed Roberts and others with disabilities who were attending the University of California at Berkeley. Ed, who was a post-polio quad, was living in the campus hospital and was required to be back in his room by 10 PM. He was denied the right to make many of the basic decisions' college students took for granted. So, Ed, with the help of some federal funding, started the first Center for Independent Living (CIL). The Center focused on assisting people with disabilities to live in the community with whatever supports they needed.

The creation of the Center started a national movement. In 1978 the federal Rehabilitation Act was amended to include Title VII which for the first time provided federal funding for the development of a national network.

At the present there are 403 Centers for Independent Living throughout the United States. Although each center provides the same core services; Information and Referral, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills, Advocacy and Transition services, not all centers have the same programs. All centers though are driven by the Independent Living philosophy that is based on the belief that persons with disabilities

have the same basic human rights as persons without disabilities to participate in and contribute to community life. It is about persons with disabilities having the right and seeking the opportunity to make their own choices and take responsibilities in matters such as living arrangements, transportation, social life, employment, and physical care. Centers for Independent Living are there to provide guidance, support, resources and information needed to assist persons to make their choices and to become self-sufficient as possible. It means taking risks and being allowed to succeed and fail on your own terms.



Animated picture of males and females and one female in wheelchair all in hiking clothes

HAPPY TRAILS TO YOU! Accessibility Outdoors

Outdoor adventures are for everyone, regardless of someone's abilities. There is now improved accessibility at many national and state parks, public beaches and more, much of what used to be off-limits for wheelchair users is now within reach.

There is a beginner's guide for the wheelchair user who is just not sure how to begin a new adventure of hitting the trails. What to pack, where to go that is accessible and if there may be a group in the

community to join for these adventures. Planning is the key to have a safe and fun time in the great outdoors.

Essentially, having the right gear on hand will make your trip more stress free. Flashlights, a compass, sunscreen, a rain poncho and water are the basics and of course necessities. If you are using a power or a manual chair, rolling on an outdoor trail can get bumpy. Uneven terrain may loosen parts of the wheelchair and knock them out of place so carrying a set of Allen wrenches will come in handy for on the spot fix. If you have limited upper body control, Velcro straps can add stability when they are wrapped around your chest or your feet.

Unfortunately, not every park is accessible but even if the trails are, an accessible restroom may be nonexistent or difficult to find. Consider a TravelJohn or TravelJane disposable urinal to take with you. This may be a good option for many wheelchair users.

Most National Parks have accessibility measures in place. The National Park Service website has accessibility information for all parks, accessible trails and lodging details. If you are a person with a permanent disability who is a US Citizen or a resident, you can apply online for an Access Pass at \$10.00 or in-person at a national park for free. A pass will provide admittance to more than 2,000 recreational sites across the US.

Traillink makes it easy to find wheelchair accessible trails around the country where you can find a trail near you. National Park Capable and Disabled Hikers are two other communities that share information about accessible hiking destination. Both host group hikes and events as well. Another resource is ACCESS North Carolina: A Vacation and Travel Guide for People with Disabilities.

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/vocational-rehabilitation-services/independent-living-people-disabilities/access-north-carolina-vacation-and-travel-guide-people-disabilities>

If you do plan to head to the beaches this summer, you can find information online and a contact number by going to the beaches' website or contact the lifeguard station of the area you are going to visit.

Plan ahead, be prepared and have an enjoyable summer!

News source: cntraveler.com/story/a-wheelchair-users-guide-to-getting-outdoors-this-summer



Our **Cyberpals program** places donated, refurbished computers into the homes of local people with disabilities and we are always in need of donations. We gratefully accept donations of desktop computers, laptops, and most computer peripherals that are no greater than 10 years old. If you're interested in donating, **please call 828-298-1977 and ask for Marcos.**

The staff at DisAbility Partners hope that everyone will have a safe and memorable summer!!