

County of Cumberland

Cultural & Heritage Commission:

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Plan: 2018-2021

Organizational Background

The Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission (hereinafter “Commission”) is responsible for the development of County programs to promote public interest in local and county history, in the arts, and in the cultural values, goals and traditions of the community. It serves as an Advisory Board on arts/heritage to the Board of Chosen Freeholders, aids them in seeking available State and Federal funds to develop and support historical, arts and cultural programs, and works to foster interest of the community members in volunteering for arts/heritage projects.

The Commission administers the local arts re-grant and block grant program, which directs grant funding from the State Council on the Arts and the Historical Commission to local arts and history organizations. The Commission collaborates with other cultural non-profits on a variety of programming, including Teen Arts, plein air events, workshops, mural arts, and arts education programming.

Organizational Policies and Practices

The County of Cumberland has established a comprehensive equal employment opportunity policy, which does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, nationality, ancestry, marital status, liability for services in the armed forces of the United State, Family Leave status, atypical cellular or blood traits, sex/gender, age, political affiliation, sexual/affectional orientation or disability including mental or physical disability including AIDS, HIV and HIV-related illnesses subject only to conditions and limitations applicable to like persons in employment or in the provision of services. The County is currently in full compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, the NJ Law Against Discrimination, the American with Disabilities Act, N.J.A.C. Chapter 7 and any other related federal, state or local regulations. For further reference on issues relating to employment policy, please refer to the attached Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action policy (#1.01) for the County of Cumberland, which was most recently adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders on September 22, 2015 (Resolution 2015-441). It should be noted as well that a non-discrimination clause is a requirement of this policy in every contract executed with the county.

Many of the procedures for hiring personnel within the County are regulated by the New Jersey Department of Personnel. These procedures include safeguards to address non-discrimination within the hiring and promotion activities of the County. As well, a variety of reasonable accommodations are utilized to address physical and mental limitations, including the modification of doors and desks and job reassignment and reclassification.

The official appointed ADA Coordinator for THE County of Cumberland is Craig Atkinson, Director of Personnel. In addition, the Cultural & Heritage Commission, in April 2006, resolved to create an ADA Advisory Subcommittee to the Commission. This subcommittee is comprised of at least three members of the Cumberland County Disabled Advisory Council along with a liaison from the Commission. Serving currently are: David Grennon, Director of the County Aging & Disability Resource Connection; LuAnn Parkin, Vice-Chairperson of the County Disabled Advisory Council; Penny Wells, a member of the Council, and; Ella Boykin of the Cultural & Heritage Commission. All four subcommittee members have extensive experience either with disabilities of their own or professional experience with the disabled community.

As a component of the Commission's application checklist, each re-grant applicant is required to include their organization's current ADA Plan. One of the tasks of the ADA Advisory Subcommittee is to review and comment on the adequacy of the ADA plans submitted by re-grantees. Should an organization submit an unsatisfactory ADA plan, the ADA Advisory Subcommittee is made available to provide technical assistance to the organization in amending its plan. In addition, each year within the Commission's workshop series, an ADA planning/sensitivity training workshop is held. These workshops are usually conducted jointly by the Office for the Disabled for Cumberland County and the Cultural Access Network. Besides mandatory attendance for those re-grant organizations which submit less than satisfactory ADA plans, Commission members and staff are encouraged to attend.

Beyond the ADA workshop, the Cultural and Heritage Commission meets individually with each re-grant organization and reviews the implementation of their ADA Plan by completing the checklist provided within the Cultural Access Network ADA Self-assessment Survey and Planning Tool. The goal of the Commission is to attain satisfactory ADA Plans for all returning re-grant organizations.

Finally, as part of the Re-grant Agreement documentation, each re-grantee is required to complete an ADA Compliance Rider (sample included herein), which identifies an accessibility coordinator for each re-grantee and the services currently provided for accessibility of funded programming.

Grievance Procedure

Both the County of Cumberland and the Cultural and Heritage Commission maintain individual grievance procedures, both of which are attached herein. These procedures

provide for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by the U.S. Department of Justice regulations implementing title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Complaints and responses to complaints may be submitted in a variety of formats in order to accommodate various disabilities. These formats may include, but are not limited to, written letters or emails, verbal phone conversations, person-to-person conversation and via a third party. Meetings with individuals making complaints will be held on the first floor of the County Administration Building, which is fully accessible.

Programs and Services for people with disabilities

The Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission administers the county's re-granting program. This program is open to non-profit organizations within the county. The application is provided on the Commission's website and mailed upon request. A large print version of the application is also available upon request. All public meetings relating to the program are fully accessible.

The Commission, besides administering the re-grant program, often conducts events at the Performing Arts Center at Cumberland County College. This facility provides the following services and programs for people with disabilities:

- ✓ Infrared listening devices are offered free-of-charge to all performances, which work from any seat in the house;
- ✓ Sign Language Interpretation is offered for appropriate performances with two weeks notice;
- ✓ Captioning services are available at appropriate performances with two weeks notice, and;
- ✓ Service animals are accommodated in the wheelchair accessible seating.

The Commission produces a monthly newsletter which is distributed digitally via email. The newsletter can be mailed in large print upon request.

The Commission hosts Mauricetown Artists Day at the historic village of Mauricetown in Commercial Township each year. During this event, handicapped accessible portable restroom facilities are provided for the participants. This program is produced in collaboration with the Mauricetown Historical Society, which has installed brick walkways between its facilities to increase accessibility for those in wheelchairs.

The Commission sponsors an annual Teen Arts Festival held in the Arts District of the City of Millville and produced by Levoy Theater. This event utilizes a variety of venues throughout Millville, all of which are accessible.

The Commission participates in Disability Awareness Day, an annual event held in October facilitated by the Cumberland County Disabled Advisory Council. Accessible events and activities funded through the Commission's re-granting program are advertised at the Commission's booth and a presentation is made highlighting the Commission's accessibility efforts throughout the county.

While the Commission has made significant progress over the years in building full accessibility into its programs and services, the following additional goals will be pursued over the next three years.

2018-2021 Plan goals by year:

Year 1:

- ▶ Digital audio podcasts of the Commission newsletter will be made available for download from its website or the website will be reviewed to ensure speech reading software can accurately read newsletter articles.
- ▶ A separate page will be established on the Commission's website which will highlight the various methods the Commission utilizes to ensure full accessibility to its and its re-grantee's programs.

Staff time will be required to develop and maintain the comprehensive list of services and programs and generally update the website.

Effective Communication: Marketing of Programs and Services to people with disabilities

All of the Commission's marketing/outreach advertising has the wheelchair symbol indicating the facility is accessible for people with limited mobility and the assistive listening symbol indicating an assistive listening system is available. The Commission utilizes its dedicated website as the primary informational resource for activities conducted by the Commission and its re-grantees. Spelling and grammar is double-checked on the website to ensure speech synthesizers function correctly and all abbreviations and acronyms are spelled out to make the information more readable for someone using a Braille reader.

As well, on all Commission meeting agendas the following statement is provided: "Public transportation to the meeting location is available through NJ TRANSIT bus route 553 (closest stop is Rt. 49 and Bank Street), which covers Upper Deerfield, Bridgeton, Millville and Vineland. For details, fare information and schedule visit www.njtransit.com. NJ TRANSIT's bus fleet is 100% accessible with bus lifts or ramps. All buses have state-of-the-art securement systems to secure customers' mobility devices. It's required that mobility devices be secured. The operator will assist you with the mobility device securements and the optional lap/shoulder belts as requested. NJ TRANSIT also offers kneeling buses for people who have difficulty with the first step up into the bus. When a bus "kneels" the first step lowers several inches toward the ground. All buses are equipped with this feature. If you would like to use the kneeling feature, simply ask the bus operator to make the bus kneel, then board as usual. Seating located nearest to the front door is designed and designated to provide easy access for people with disabilities."

2018-2021 Plan goals by year:

Year 1:

- ▶ The symbol for large print will be added to all marketing since large print brochures are available at all times;
- ▶ The NJTRANSIT statement that is currently printed on meeting agendas will be added to the frontpage of the Commission's website;
- ▶ All appropriate accessibility symbols will be added to the frontpage of the Commission's website;
- ▶ A separate section of the website will be dedicated to accessibility.

Staff time will be required to develop and maintain website services.

Facility Accessibility

The Commission conducts most administrative functions from the Cumberland County Administration Building, located at 164 W. Broad Street, Bridgeton. This building has been reviewed via a comprehensive self-assessment and the following improvements were made to the building when it became the County's Administrative Office in 2015:

- All interior door hardware was replaced with ADA approved latches, which can be opened easily with one hand, with a closed fist, or by a person with a limited grasp or strength;
- An interior ramp was installed to the rear entrance, which is immediately adjacent to handicapped marked parking spaces;
- A sliding motion-activated front entrance door;
- A handicapped accessible restroom was installed providing full wheelchair accessibility, grab bars and appropriate height sink basins, soap dispenser and towel dispenser;
- In the original restrooms, counters were replaced to provide wheelchair accessibility and stalls were restructured to provide width appropriate for wheelchairs;
- Signs were installed throughout the facility which includes braille.

Events held throughout the county vary by location. When an event is proposed, Commission staff completes a facility self-assessment of the interior and exterior space and makes recommendations to the venue on potential improvements. All facilities selected must meet basic accessibility standards, including parking, ingress/egress, restrooms, wheelchair seating, etc.

An ADA Compliance Rider (attached) is included as a required attachment to all re-grantee contracts. This document includes a checklist for re-grantees to complete, which identifies the accessibility of all venues utilized for performances funded through the Commission's block granting program.

2018-2021 Plan goals by year:

Year 1:

- ▶ The Commission's website will identify exact accessibility for every venue utilized for Commission programming;
- ▶ Appropriate handlebars will be added to the interior ramp at the County Administration Building.

Staff time will be required to provide detailed data for the website and facility costs will be incurred for the installation of the handlebars.