

# ADA 101:

## What Your Municipality Needs to Know About the Americans with Disabilities Act



**Peter Johnke**  
(he/him)  
**VCIL**  
Deputy Director



**Kaya Sachs**  
(she/her)  
Multipurpose Service Dog in Training  
Extraordinaire  
(and Purebred Chihuahua)



**Cara Sachs**  
(she/her)  
**VCIL**  
ADA Advocate

New England  Center

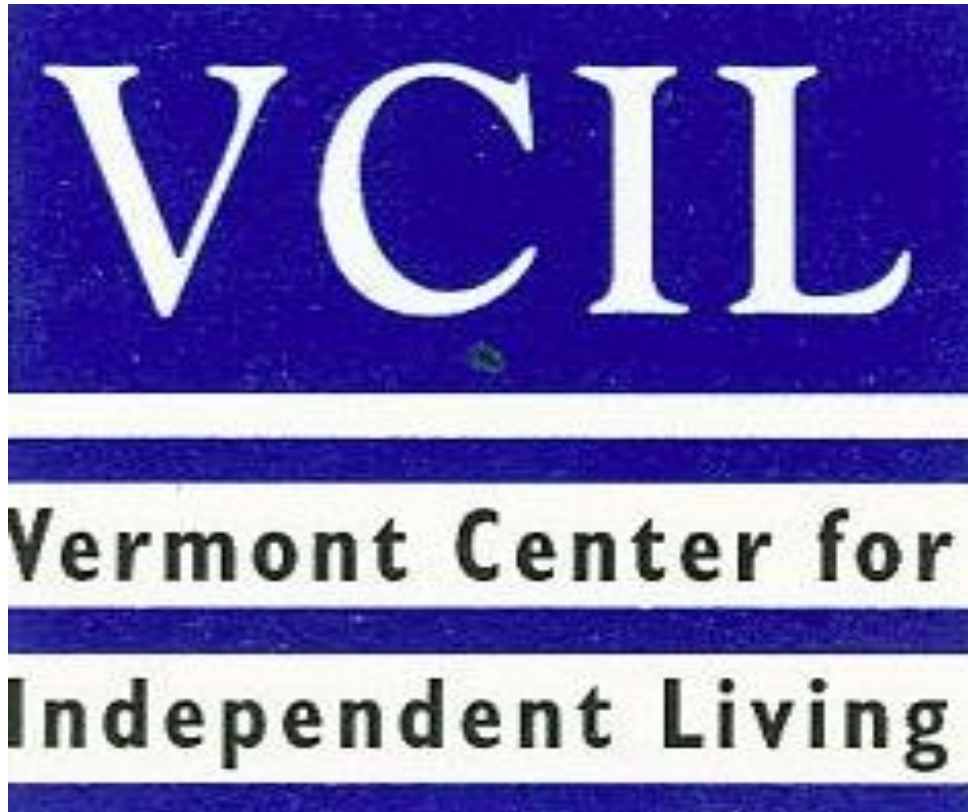


A project of the  
Institute for Human Centered Design

**VCIL**

Vermont Center for  
Independent Living

# Who are we?



**The Vermont Center for Independent Living is a state-wide, cross disability rights organization, most of the staff have disabilities ourselves.**

**You can reach us here:**

**802-229-0501 (Voice/TTY)**

**800-639-1522 (Toll-free)**

**802-662-1153 (videophone)**

**info@vcil.org www.vcil.org**

**Ask us any questions – and don't worry, we've probably heard them before!**

**You don't know  
what you don't know...  
until you know it.**



**This is the place to ask, make mistakes, etc.**

**WE WON'T JUDGE YOU.**



# What does **DISABILITY** mean to you?



# Equal Access vs “Special”

- Civil rights laws have made independent living more possible than ever
- Accommodations allow people equal access to community





# What is a MAJOR LIFE ACTIVITY?

The activities most people think of:

- ▶ Walking
- ▶ Talking
- ▶ Hearing
- ▶ Seeing

But these are Major Life Activities too:

- ▶ Breathing
- ▶ Eating
- ▶ Playing
- ▶ Working
- ▶ Exercising

# Assumptions

- ▶ People with disabilities can't be independent
- ▶ You can always see the disability
- ▶ Everyone who uses a wheelchair is the same
- ▶ People who have disabilities always need help

**Marcy Ryan  
United Way  
Hometown  
Hero Award  
Recipient**




# Use these terms... ("person first language")


- ▶ Person who uses a wheelchair
- ▶ Person with a cognitive disability
- ▶ Person with a psychiatric disability
- ▶ Person who is Deaf
- ▶ Person who blind
- ▶ Person who is Hard of Hearing
- ▶ **For some, their disability is first – they will tell you**



# **AVOID these terms...**


- Handicapped
  - "Handi-capable" or "diff-abled"
  - Special Needs
  - Slow
  - Psycho
  - Wheelchair bound (wheelchairs are liberating!)
  - Dumb
  - Crazy
  - Retarded
- 

# Please Do Not:

- ▶ **Don't** touch the wheelchair or other assistive device unless you are asked to, and/or receive permission
  - ▶ **Don't** yell or speak loudly unless asked
  - ▶ **Don't** grab a person with a disability or "help" without asking for and receiving permission - respect personal space and autonomy
  - ▶ **Ignore the service animal** - "No touch, no talk, no eye contact, no pictures, no kissy noises"
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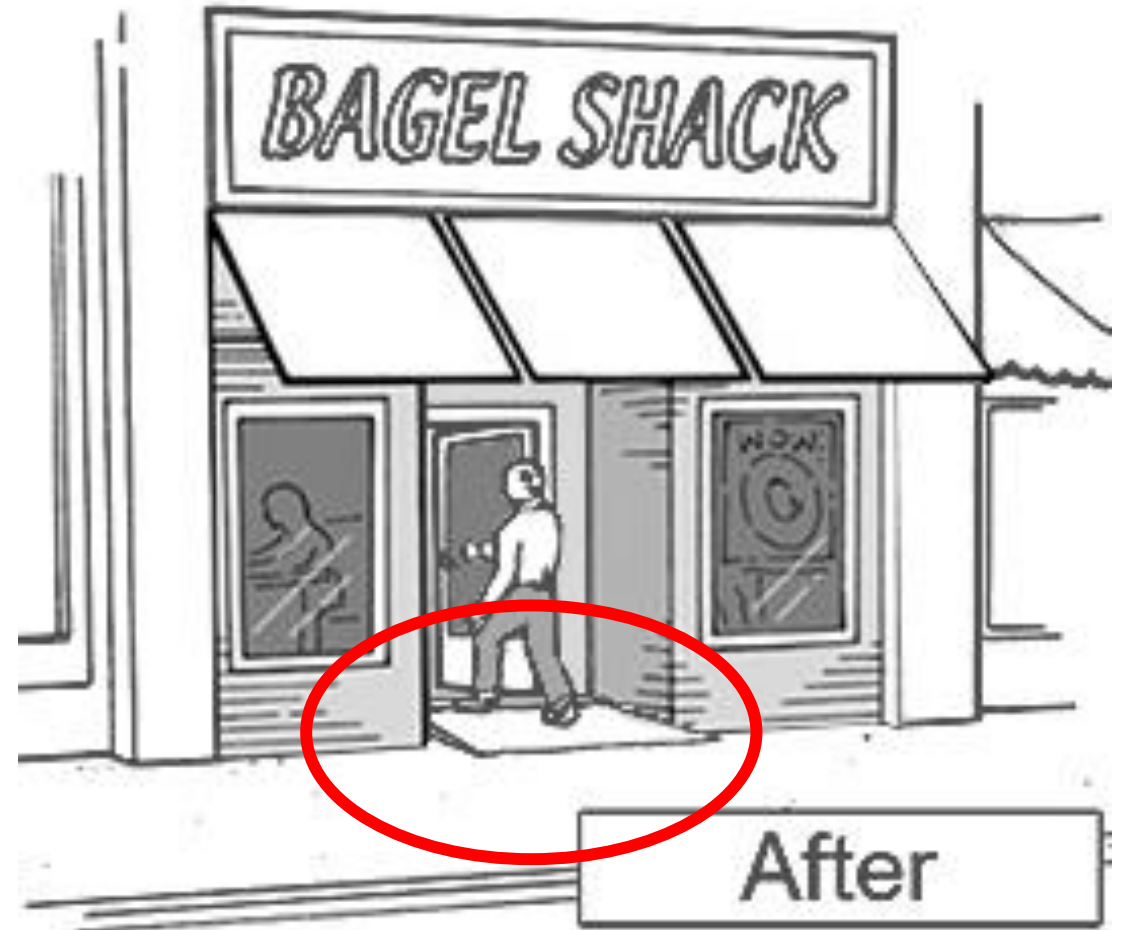
# What Does Compliance Mean?

Equal Access to:

- Buildings
  - Services
  - Programs
  - Activities
- 



# Low-Cost Access Solutions



# Lower counters provide access to services



# Self Evaluation & Transition Plan

All public entities subject to Title II requires a Self-Evaluation or assessment of services, policies, practices, and procedures.

Requires a Transition Plan where physical changes are necessary to achieve **program access** (if 50 or more employees)



# YIKES! – Where do I start?

- ▶ Achieving access is an on-going process
- ▶ Not something that you do once and you're done

VCIL's Community Access Program has a motto:

***Making Vermont accessible  
by removing one step at a time***

- ▶ Set small goals with a timeline

# What Next

Two parts:

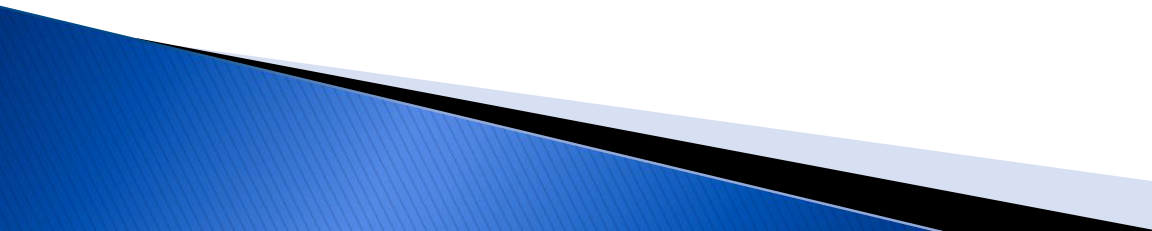
1. Self-evaluations of policies, practices and procedures
2. Self-evaluation of facilities

Reach out – involve people with disabilities in your community - This is especially helpful when reviewing policies and procedures

You may want to have an ADA stakeholders group




# Policies are Just as Important as Physical Access


- ▶ A policy that all buildings are fragrance free and the buildings are cleaned with fragrance free products makes buildings accessible to people with Multiple Chemical Sensitivities
  - ▶ Make sure your Website is accessible too
- 




# Site Evaluation

- ▶ This may be contracted out or do it yourself
  - ▶ Needs to be thorough and detailed so it's accurate
  - ▶ Should be organized to aid in prioritization
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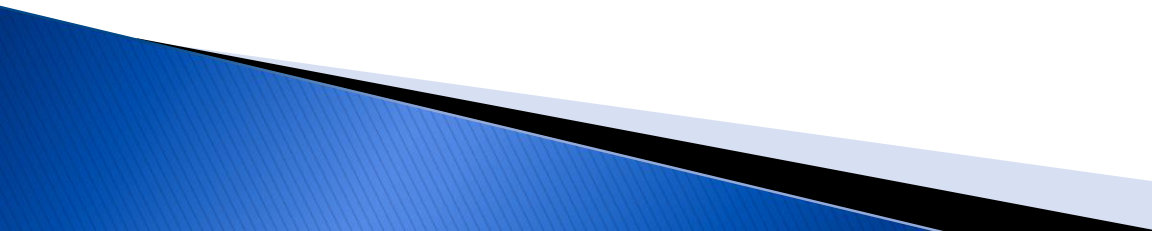
# On Your Mark...

- ▶ Get Organized
  - ▶ Preparation
  - ▶ Tools
  - ▶ Checklists
  - ▶ **Camera**
- 

# Get Organized

- ▶ One person can conduct a survey, but it's easier with two people. One person can take the measurements and the other person can fill out the checklist and take photos.
  - ▶ A partner also will provide a second opinion and help assure you don't accidentally "miss" something.
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# Essential Tools

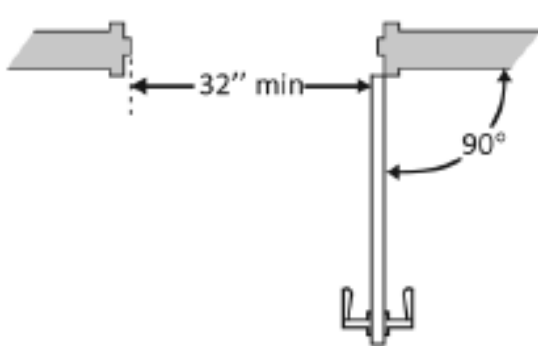
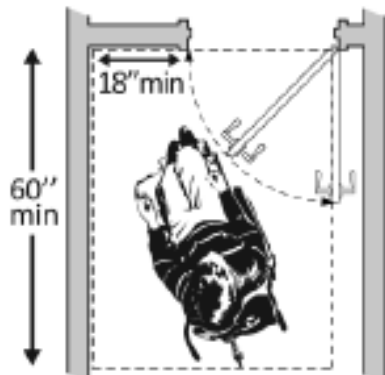
- ▶ Writing Tablet (and multiple pens)
  - ▶ Accessibility Guidelines/Checklist
  - ▶ Tape Measure – A 6-12ft one and a 35 foot one
  - ▶ Digital Level – 2 foot or 2 foot regular level and tape measure
  - ▶ Door Pressure Gauge (fish weight scale will work for pulls)
  - ▶ **Camera**
  - ▶ Tool to measure small changes in level/thresholds (carpenter combination level)
- 

# Checklists - Examples

Priority 1 – Approach & Entrance		Comments		Possible Solutions												
1.1	<p>Is there at least one route from site arrival points (parking, passenger loading zones, public sidewalks and public transportation stops) that does not require the use of stairs? [See 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design – 206.2.1]</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes, location of route:</p>		Photo #:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add a ramp</li> <li>• Regrade to 1:20 maximum slope</li> <li>• Add a lift if site constraints prevent other solutions</li> </ul>												
<b>Parking</b> Accessible parking spaces should be identified by size, access aisle and signage.																
1.2	<p>If parking is provided for the public, are an adequate number of accessible spaces provided? [208.2]</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Total #:</p> <p>Accessible #:</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Total Spaces</th> <th>Accessible Spaces</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 - 25</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>26 - 50</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>51 - 75</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>76 - 100</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">100+ see 2010 Standards 208.2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Total Spaces	Accessible Spaces	1 - 25	1	26 - 50	2	51 - 75	3	76 - 100	4	100+ see 2010 Standards 208.2		Photo #:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconfigure by repainting lines</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Total Spaces	Accessible Spaces															
1 - 25	1															
26 - 50	2															
51 - 75	3															
76 - 100	4															
100+ see 2010 Standards 208.2																



**Interior Doors – to classrooms, medical exam rooms, conference rooms, etc.**

<p>2.40 Is the door opening width at least 32 inches clear, between the face of the door and the stop, when the door is open 90 degrees? [404.2.3]</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Measurement:</p>		<p>Photo #:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install offset hinges</li> <li>• Alter the doorway</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p>2.41 If there is a front approach to the pull side of the door, is there at least 18 inches of maneuvering clearance beyond the latch side plus at least 60 inches clear depth?</p> <p>Note: See 2010 Standards 404.2.4 for maneuvering clearance requirements on the push side of the door and side approaches to the pull side of the door.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Measurement:</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove obstructions</li> <li>• Reconfigure walls</li> <li>• Add automatic door opener</li> </ul>

# Carpenters Combination Level



# Alternate Method



# Get Set...(Prioritize)

- ▶ Which buildings have the most foot traffic?
- ▶ Use the checklist and start with a small building or one that is already mostly accessible. This will give you practice on using the Checklist.
- ▶ Priority 1 – Approach and Entrance
  - Start with where the accessible parking space is and the path they would travel to get into the building.
- ▶ Priority 2 – Access to Goods and Services
- ▶ Priority 3 – Toilet rooms

# GO!

## Specific Measurements –

- ▶ Always take specific measurements and write them down – don't write phrases such as "seems", "appears", "looks", etc.
- ▶ Write down/document everything – Even if you think a specific item only "may be" a barrier, write it down.
- ▶ Put notes on the checklist
- ▶ Take **lots** of pictures – Much easier when writing a report (and/or include them in the report)




# Transition Plan

- ▶ A Transition Plan – documents the results of the Self Evaluation
- ▶ The plan should detail how and when barriers are to be removed with a specific timeline and who is responsible
- ▶ Some things you may be able to do immediately, others will take longer – years - if it involves costly renovations (put in the budget)
- ▶ Update the plan at least once a year (it's a living document)

**This document shows your 'good faith' effort to come into compliance with the ADA.**

# Writing the Plan

- ▶ Involve your community
  - ▶ Keep regulatory changes in mind
  - ▶ Develop usable databases that track progress on your Plan
  - ▶ Establish priorities and limits
  - ▶ Get public comment
  - ▶ Post on the web
- 

# Pitfalls and Tips

- ▶ Doorway width – Measure from the edge of the door to the door jamb, not door jamb to door jamb
- ▶ Be careful about placement of rugs and mats at entry ways.
  - If edges are not completely flat or the mats move, they may get wound around the wheels of a wheelchair.
- ▶ Don't forget signage
- ▶ If you use a PA system for meetings, you must provide assisted listening devices

# More Tips

- ▶ The bathroom may be perfectly accessible until someone puts the trash can in the wrong place.
- ▶ Don't forget sidewalks – have a person in the community who uses a wheelchair help with the assessment
  - Alternative - Push a **loaded** two-wheel dolly *forward*, this will give you a sense of how easy or difficult it is to get over the spaces in the cement or over the lip of a threshold or ramp
- ▶ Make sure tree branches hanging over the sidewalk are a minimum of 80 inches above the ground – A person who is blind would run into lower branches (maintenance)





# The ADA is the *Minimum* Standard

- ▶ Make doors 36 inches wide
- ▶ Put in automatic doors
- ▶ Improve lighting
  
- ▶ If the building is historic, you still have to meet some minimum standards. Check with the Division for Historic Preservation

# Just Do It!

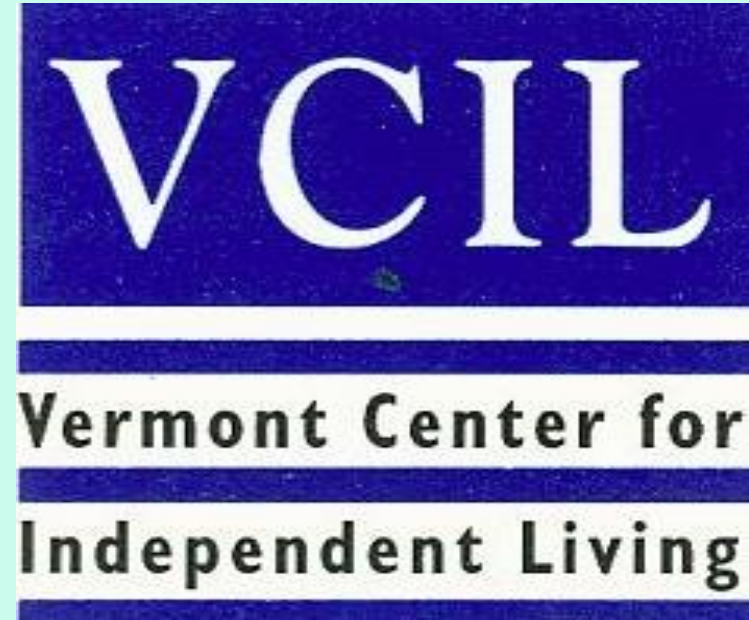
- ▶ The entire purpose of a self-evaluation/transition plan is to:
  - Improve your community
  - Allows marginalized groups to broaden perspectives in the community
  - Eliminate discrimination
  - Comply with the ADA

A Plan Requires Action  
Execution, Execution, Execution

# Contact Information

**Peter Johnke**  
**Community Access Coordinator & Deputy Director**  
**VCIL Montpelier**  
**802-224-1815**  
**[peter@vcil.org](mailto:peter@vcil.org)**

**Cara Sachs**  
**ADA Advocate**  
**VCIL Burlington**  
**802-224-1809**  
**[cara@vcil.org](mailto:cara@vcil.org)**



# Resources

- ▶ [www.VCIL.org](http://www.VCIL.org)
- ▶ [www.access-board.gov/adaag/html/adaag.htm](http://www.access-board.gov/adaag/html/adaag.htm)
- ▶ [www.usdoj.gov](http://www.usdoj.gov)
- <http://AskJAN.org/links/adalinks.htm#III>
- [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)



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