

Survey of the Rural Library and the Americans with Disabilities Act

By *David Brisendine*

...[E]qual in 'certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.' This they said, and this they meant. They did not mean to assert the obvious untruth, that all were then actually enjoying that equality, nor yet, that they were about to confer it immediately upon them. In fact they had no power to confer such a boon. They meant simply to declare the right, so that the enforcement of it might follow as fast as circumstances should permit. They meant to set up a standard maxim for free society, which should be familiar to all, and revered by all. (Lincoln qtd. Fehrenbacher 91)

In writing these words one-hundred and forty years ago, President Abraham Lincoln was in the process of re-establishing the principles on which the United States was founded. His intent was clear: persons of another race or color were to have the same rights as all citizens of the United States. However, shifting away from slavery, which had been the status quo, meant weaving a new fabric of social equality that was not, as it seemed, just around the corner.

Sixty-three years would pass before the passage of the 19th amendment when women received the right to vote, and citizens were still one-hundred and seven years from the passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. The tide of change moves slow but steady in the American political and social consciousness. For yet another overlooked population in the United States, physically and mentally disable citizens, when would it be time for their voices to be heard?

This question was answered in July of 1990 as President George Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law. The ADA is one of history's watershed moments for civil rights reforms. The purpose of this act, directed to disabled citizens of the U.S., was not, as some have argued, to give preference, but rather to create a level starting point for all people; to take the term "disabled" out of the equation concerning employment, public access, freedom of movement and the ability to utilize public and private services.

As a public library, is it not already our mission to provide access of information to all people? The following are the results of a survey which asks this question of two-hundred and fifty rural libraries. "(C)ircumstances" now permit and even require that accommodations for disabled patrons be made (91). However, are libraries (and we as librarians) facing this challenge of meeting the varied needs of our disabled patrons?

Or are we lacking in confronting this challenge and therefore missing this opportunity to assist disabled patrons in, as President Lincoln stated, "actually enjoying that equality" (91)?

Executive Summary

Purpose

This survey has been conducted in order to evaluate if and to what extent public libraries across the United States have made changes to accommodate mentally and physically challenged patrons. To accomplish this task, the researcher looked to the guidelines and regulations in Titles III and IV of the ADA, in order to find a basis upon which libraries could be surveyed on regulations which affect them universally. Title III of the ADA addresses access to public accommodations and services, while Title IV looks to the availability of telecommunications services to the disabled (Fersh 26-28).

The survey was structured in five sections. Sections One and Five are each constructed of four general interest questions concerning the library's response to varied aspects of ADA. Section Two is headed "The Library's Physical Structure," Three, "Informational structure," and finally, four, "Staff Training." The researcher feels that while the above topics relate to different aspects or Titles of the ADA, similarities are found in the fact that all affect the accessibility of mentally or physically challenged patrons to the library's information.

Methodology In Brief

Two-hundred and fifty surveys were mailed to a random sampling of public libraries meeting a population requirement of 2,500 to 25,000, a rough calculation of a rural environment, across the United States. The library addresses were taken from the American Library Directory, 1997 edition. Surveys were addressed to the director of each of the libraries and mailed on October 28, 1997, with a request to return by or shortly after November 17, 1997. As of the date of tabulation, November 26, 100 responses or 40% of the surveys have been returned. In turn you will note that the statistics are percentages of the 100 returned surveys.

Survey Notes

A few factors which must be taken into account while reviewing the survey results are as follows. Please notice that a parallel structure exists within the questioning of Parts II-IV. This similar structure works to uniformly answer the focused question in a manner consistent with the bal-

ance of the parts (parts II-IV). Libraries which have just moved into a new facility or are in the process of moving noted that a large factor in deciding to move was ADA compliance. However, it will be noted in question A whether or not the library must make changes to meet the ADA guidelines. This initial caution is important for two reasons. On the following questions, 1-B, 2-B, and 3-B, respondents are asked to note which of the listed changes they have made. Respondents who have moved into a new facility will have noted these changing by circling No to question (A) while they may or may not note any listed changes.

This observation is noted to draw attention to how closely linked (A) and questions 1-b, 2-b, and 3-B are and may be interpreted. Additionally, please note the relationship between 1-B, 2-B, and 3-B and the lead-in question 1-A, 2-A, or 3-A, respectively. The percent given in the listing of 1-B, 2-B, and 3-B is out of 100% of the respondents who answered yes to question 1-A, 2-A, or 3-A. Finally, the fill-in-the blank questions are answered with selections of the survey pool. This method was chosen for two reasons; first, even with the option of personalizing the response, many of the answers were similar with only varying vocabulary, and secondly, not all respondents chose to answer all the questions. Therefore the need for this structure grew out of the given respondents.

The Survey, Parts I-V

Part I

Starting with the most basic of questions, Part I of the survey works to establish a tone and to evaluate whether the library in question has or will soon recognize the need for change due to the passage of the ADA.

Consisting of four questions (A-D), Part I is a search for the following:

- (A) Does your library need to make changes to meet the guidelines of the ADA?
- (B) Is your library working under an implementation plan for compliance?
- (C) Is the library working with a consultant to make the changes?
- (D) Would your library wish to share a copy of their implementation plan for ADA accommodations?

All four questions are yes/no answers and lead directly to the subsequent Parts II-IV in establishing a basis for any number changes in the goal to better assist the physically and mentally challenged library patron.

In question A, 52% of respondents stated yes, they are working to make changes in order to assist disabled patrons. In turn, 47% note that

their library already meets the standards recommended by the ADA. 1% chose not to answer question A.

Question B looks for libraries that have an implementation plan for compliance with the ADA. 32% answered that yes, their library does have a plan, while 55% do not have a plan for compliance. 13% did not respond to this question.

In question C, 43% of the respondents that answered "Yes" to question A stated that their particular library has utilized a consultant to aid in directing the implementation of the plan to meet ADA requirements/guidelines. In, 67% noted in question C that they had not utilized a consultant.

Part II

Part II of the survey dives into the heart of the researcher's goals and objectives. In Part II we examine the library's physical structure and the ADA.

Constructed of seven question (1-A through 1-G), Part II will show the sampled groups' response to:

- (1-B) What changes have been make to your library's physical structure?
- (1-C) and (1-D) Other physical improvements planned;
- (1-E) Money spent altering physical structure;
- (1-F) Sources of that funding; and
- (1-G) If no improvements are planned, what factors have prevented your library from making physical improvements?

The seven questions are meant to compare and to some extent contrast the changes made to physical structure in the 100 returned surveys.

Has there been any consistency to the changes made? Have the libraries recognized that changes needed to be made, and if so, was there a consistent source these libraries drew from to make the changes?

In question 1-A, we ask: has your library made changes? To this question 82% of the 100 libraries responding answered yes, they had made changes inside or outside the library building to accommodate physically and mentally challenged patrons. 14% stated no, they had not, and 4% did not respond to the question.

This multi-part question 1-B on what changes have been made is most straightforward and best reported with the breakdown below. Remember, the percentages are taken from the total "yes" respondents in question 1-A

49% Curb Cuts	57% Ramps (Outside)
46% New Signage	32% Automatic Doors
38% Floor Plan Adjustment	55% Parking Lot Configuration
66% Bathroom Remodeling	6% Chair Lifts
11% Ramps (Inside)	46% Furniture Adjustment

Within question 1-C, we discover if other physical improvements are planned to the same set of respondents. 43% state yes, more physical improvements are planned. And 50% say no, more are not planned. This leaves 7% of the surveys not responding to question 1-C.

Question 1-D, the fill-in-the blank question searching for lists of planned improvements, yielded a sprinkling of results which libraries may not have been able to answer in question 1-B. The highlights were a standard list of features needed for building accessibility: new ramps, curb cuts, bathroom remodeling, automatic doors, new signage, and adjustments in floor plans.

The answers to question 1-E are as wideranging as this researcher believes they can possibly be. Probably to the fault of question structure, answers move from the price tag of a new library building to the cost of wood used in building a ramp behind the library. The answers are selected as follows: if yes to question 1-A, what has been the approximate amount of money spent altering the library's physical structure? This is an example of the range in answers: 1.2 million, \$700,000, \$200,000, \$15,000, \$5,000, \$2,000 and even \$150.00. On average, the cost was listed as \$8,500. In addition, this question asked: Over what period of time were the monies being spent? On average, the length of time was stated as five years.

Question 1-F presented the researcher with another problem in question tabulation. The question reads: If yes to question 1-A, what is the source of funding for the changes? (A) Library budgeted Line Item, (B) Grant Funding or (C) Alternative funding source. A problem arose in analyzing the relationship between the fill-in-the-blank statements of funding sources and the simply "checked-off" answer. However, even with this apparent problem, a trend did develop between the vast majority of libraries.

While not statistically sound, almost all the respondents to question 1-F stated that a mixture of funding sources were applied to pay for the above changes. Some examples of the grant and alternative funding are as follows: local county and city funding and foundations, the Library Services and Construction Act Title III, bonds issued from local governments, donations, capital projects funds, and Friends of the Library funds.

Finally, question 1-G, ending Part II, asks: If no to question 1-A, what factors have prevented your library from making physical improvements?

The following answers show two sides of the goal of full physical accessibility. Unfortunately, the lack of money is the leading cause (roughly 3/4 of those who responded) of occlusion to full compliance with the ADA. On a somewhat happier note, answer 1-G reveals that roughly 1/4 of the polled libraries are in the process of or working toward renovating and/or building a new library facility.

Part III

Part III will work to establish the rural libraries' response to Informational Structure and ADA, regarding the library's challenged patrons.

A set of seven (2-A through 2-G) questions will provide the answers to the following form of investigation:

- (2-A) Has your library made changes to accommodate the informational needs of physically and mentally challenged patrons?
- (2-B) What are the changes made?
- (2-C) and (2-D) Other improvements made;
- (2-E) Amount of money spent making these changes;
- (2-F) From what source was the money to make necessary changes obtained; and
- (2-G) If no changes were made, what factors have prevented your library from making informational accommodations?

In asking these questions it was and is the researcher's hope to gain insight into what, if any, steps have been taken to assist challenged patrons above and beyond the obvious physical barriers which public library may present. Are we as the collective library asking our patrons with disabilities what can we as an information provider do to help them better access the answers the patron requires? We ask this not only in our terms of service, but to learn what option will work to benefit the entire community. Part III will work to show what we as libraries for the public have accomplished in this area, and what we can do to improve service in the future.

We ask in question 2-A whether the library has made changes to accommodate the informational needs of physically and mentally challenged patrons.

To this question 77% of the libraries responding answered yes, they had made changes. 18% stated no, they had not, while 5% did not respond to question 2-A.

Similar to Part II of the survey, the next question, a multi-part question

2-B, is answered with the breakdown below. Again, please remember that the percentages are taken from the total respondents in question 2-A. This list shows the responses to changes or accommodations have been made to your library's informational structure.

77% Staff Assistance
 10% Computer Readers
 31% Quiet Study Rooms
 25% Lighting Adjustments
 2% Staff Readers
 99% Books on Tape
 45% Varied Subject Level Text

38% Captioned Films/Videos
 17% Enlarging computer
 Hardware & Software
 19% TTY/TDD Capability
 9% Braille Text, Readers
 or Printers

At this point, the researcher feels a note must be added. Because of the questions structure in 2-B, no distinction was made in the category of Books on Tape. One may not ascertain from this survey whether the respondents are participating in the Library of Congress's Books on Tape program or if the library is purchasing recorded audio books. However, it is good to note that a full 99% of the responding 77 libraries responding to questions 2-A and 2-B are providing some form of recorded books for their patrons.

Question 2-C asks if other informational accommodations or improvements are planned from the same set of 77 respondents. 22% state yes, more informational accommodations or improvements are planned, and 74% state that, no more are planned at this time. 4% of the surveys not responding to question 2-C.

Question 2-D, a fill-in-the-blank question requesting lists of planned accommodations, showed results reflective of what libraries may not have been able to answer in question 2-B. The following is a list of the most mentioned changes: computer enhancements, addition of a TTY/TDD machine, changes to study rooms, a new facility, and adding on to the existing options available in children's centers.

The answers to question 2-E are, again, varied in a range of possibilities that reflect the range of changes being made. The answers are given as an average and selected as follows: If yes to question 2-A, what has been the approximate amount of money spent altering the library to meet informational accommodations? On average the cost was listed as \$5,000. The question also asked, over what period of time were the monies being spent? On average, the length of time was stated as five years.

In similar structure to 1-F in Part II, question 2-F reads: If yes to question 2-A, what is the source of funding for the changes? (A) library budgeted line item, (B) grant funding, or (C) alternative funding source.

Again, even with the problem in cross-analyzing the relationship between the fill-in-the-blank statements of funding sources and the simply "checked off" answers, a trend develops between the majority of responding libraries.

Almost all the respondents to question 2-F stated that a mixture of funding sources were applied to pay for the changes. Examples of grant and alternative funding sources are as follows: Literacy Title VI, unnamed grants, a "special video fund," endowment, donations, and funds from the Friends of the Library.

Finally, question 2-G, asks: If no to question 2-A, what factors have prevented your library from making informational accommodations? Once again, unfortunately, a lack of money is the leading cause of roughly 1/2 of what is preventing rural libraries from following the ADA guidelines. The other 1/2 bases their lack-of-accommodating factor as a mixture of space limitations and "no need for change in such a small town."

Part IV

What is the library's response to training staff and volunteers to better serve physically and mentally challenged patrons? This is the focus of Part IV and to their final section of similarly structured questions. Truly inherent to the overall question of what libraries can do to better serve patrons with disabilities is the recognition that we who make up the staffing and volunteers of public libraries have a responsibility to learn more about our challenged patrons.

To this end, Part IV tries to gage the rural public library's response to the training needs of the staff. This assessment is made with the following polling:

- (3-A) Has your library provided training to volunteers (and/or) staff on how to better serve physically and mentally challenged patrons?
- (3-B) What type of training has been provided?
- (3-C and 3-D) Is any other training planned?
- (3-E) What is the amount of money spent on training?
- (3-F) How has this expense been funded? and
- (3-G) What factors have prevented your library from providing volunteer (and/or staff training)?

The need for understanding and assistance to the needs of all our patron community is only equal to the quality of service we may provide to patrons who may require extra help.

Question 3-A determines, out of the 100 surveys returned, what pattern has developed in the training of staff and/or volunteers on how to better serve physically and mentally challenged patrons. 48% of the respondents answered yes, that volunteers and/or staff have attended training. In contrast, 52% (a majority) have not attended.

The multi-part question 3-B is listed below. Percentages are taken from the breakdown of respondents who answered yes in question 3-A. 3-B is as follows: What type of training has been made available to your library's volunteers and staff?

- 56% Training on differences of physically and mentally challenged patrons
- 15% Training on adaptive technology
- 40% Individual readings
- 63% Attendance of a conference or workshop
- 13% Review of videos
- 46% Contact with local groups or individuals
- 17% Role-playing exercises

With question 3-C, we ask if other training or staff development activities are planned to the same selection of respondents. 31% state yes, more training is planned. 68% say no, more training is planned at this time, leaving 1% of the surveys not responding to question 3-C.

Question 3-D provides a fill-in-the-blank option: please list planned training and activities. This question revealed answers on two parts which were both helpful. One option from the given break-out list was given as possible training and another was an identified need to train staff and/or volunteers on the following: computer training, new technology, ongoing programs with the community, and what will be different about new facilities.

The answers to question 3-E (what has been the approximate amount of money spent on providing volunteers [and/or] staff training regarding how to better serve physically and mentally challenged patrons?) were considered and averaged. On average, the cost was listed as \$350. The question also ventured: Over what period of time were the monies being spent? Once again, on the average, the length of time was listed as five years.

Question 3-F reads, If yes to question 3-A, what is the source of funding for the changes (training); (A) library budgeted line item, (B) grant funding, or (C) alternative funding source? While not statistically sound, almost all the respondents to question 3-F stated that they use a mixture of

funding sources, typically grant and alternative sources, to pay for the above changes. A relatively rare minority state that the mixture also includes a library budgeted line item.

Finally question 3-G, which ends Part IV and the questions parallel in structure, asks: What factors have prevented your library from providing volunteer (and/or) staff training regarding how to better serve physically and mentally challenged patrons? The answers to follow are taken directly from the text or the respondents' returned survey. While some answers are given as statements of factual standards and expectations of living and working within a rural environment, a selected few answers show a sad reflection of how far physically and mentally challenged persons must still travel in their journey to equality.

A selection of answers is as follows:

"Included as part of overall training."

"No time or money."

"Local school provides this service for our library."

"The staff changes too often."

"At this point it—hasn't seemed necessary."

"Money...I guess."

"There is no need for it."

"Very small library—no formal training in place."

"Have not seen any of these programs offered."

"Lack of training materials and volunteers."

"Little time...little need... small staff and previous/new administration making changes as rapidly as possible."

Part V

The final section of the survey, Part V, consists of three open-ended questions regarding the ADA and the public library's reaction to the Act. Various fill-in-the-blank questions and one yes/no question brought the survey to an end:

—(4) Any creative or unusual solutions your library was able to utilize in response to the ADA?

—(5) and (6) Any type of outreach program in place for disabled patrons?

—(7) Examples and general comments on the implementation of the ADA.

The purpose of these open-ended questions was to present an opportunity for libraries to suggest personal solutions to library and ADA-related problems. In addition, this gave an opportunity to comment on the ADA itself and what their libraries are working through without applying their situation to the formal structure of the survey. While only a few respondents chose to answer this section, Part V, and the following general information questions based on patron counts and challenged patrons' counts, do shed light onto what is happening and the perception of what is taking place with the ADA in regard to public libraries across the United States.

What are some creative or unusual solutions your library was able to utilize in response to the ADA? states question 4. For this listing of answers the researcher had few selections to choose from; however, a number of the better answers are listed below.

“Working with challenged patrons in our community to note what we need to change.”

“We modified an existing work station to create an ADA work station.”

“We moved into a new building.”

“Working to create a diverse board of directors.”

“Newsletters and press releases to publicize all of our changes.”

“Take books to people’s cars.”

“Used a wheelchair to develop a site survey of the library.”

“We have taken the small town personal approach; we know our patrons personally and our staff members go out of their way to help.”

“Kids Come in Special Flavors—Kit with restriction straps, cloudy glasses, blindfolds, test illustrating learning disabilities and hearing loss.”

Question 5 asks: Has your library initiated any type of outreach program to the physically and mentally challenged patrons of your community? 36% of the respondents stated that yes, their library had initiated outreach programs. In contrast, 50% said no to question 5, and 14% did not answer the question.

Question 6 yielded a diverse mixture of similar situations and solutions. The question reads: If yes to 5, could you please list a few examples of how your program operates? A selection of answers is as follows:

“We operate homebound programs.”

“Story hours for physically and mentally challenged children.”

“Study rooms for literacy volunteers.”

“Assistance for adults in need.”

“Shut in book deliveries.”

“Nursing home visits.”

“Audiobooks and closed caption video included in Senior Center Delivery collection.”

“Work with exceptional school in town—students work in the library on selected projects according to their capabilities.”

“Discovery Works—a hands-on museum attracts and serves those who are not visual learners or who are challenged.”

“We have severely disabled volunteers.”

Like question 4, all are great options and listed in the hopes that your library might “steal” an idea or two, please.

Answers to question 7 came in only two forms; the tone of the first form was one of “the ADA is great, much needed, and its time has come.” However, an equal number of respondents state “The Act is unneeded, costs too much money, and gives far too much preferential treatment to persons with physical and mental challenges.”

The general information questions (questions A,B and C) were constructed for two reasons; one, to affirm that each of the returned questionnaires was completed by a library which meets the survey’s requirements, and two, in order to note the recognized physically and mentally challenged population within their given service area. The researcher regrets that a full evaluation was not permitted given time factors; however, it was expected that some sort of uniform population base of challenged patrons might exist. This hypothesis was not supported. In fact, the populations jumped from none to numbers in the hundreds. It is this researcher’s belief

that given a proper review, a direct correlation may exist between respondents to question 5 and general information question C. If a library does not provide outreach to targeted area of the community, how can they expect to see a difference in the number of patrons from that community?

This question moves to the issue of marketing a library to the community and a whole survey within itself.

Opportunities to Excel

In conducting background investigation into this paper, the researcher reviewed a selection of articles on the ADA and its various effects on libraries and other institutions of learning and informational or public access. As the direct subject of this opportunity to survey was to delve into the statistical data gained of one hundred randomly selected rural public libraries and their reaction to the ADA, neither the time nor the proper place existed to give insight to the articles, authors, and subsequent views. Therefore a selected annotated bibliography has been included as Appendix I within this paper. The articles will provide a good basis for expanding the opportunities presented to libraries by the ADA. In addition, the researcher thought it might be helpful to extend this dialogue of constructive solutions to seen-and-hidden barriers to challenged patrons by providing the following information in Appendix A-I. A problem-to-solution chart (Appendices A-F) has been constructed for each six barriers a library may present to physically and mentally challenged patrons shown in Table 1. Appendix G contains the questionnaire tool employed to conduct the actual survey. Additionally, Appendix H lists a selection of resources a library or anyone may contact for information on any of a number of disabilities.

The researcher believes the charts (Appendix A-F) show an amalgamation of ideas that will additionally assist in troubleshooting many situations which may arise in any public library setting, thereby providing an opportunity to excel.

Background and History of the ADA

In a search for equal rights, Congress has passed "nearly thirty laws containing broad prohibitions against discrimination against people with mental and physical disabilities" (Fers 37). Today's governmental regulations, standards, and guidelines lead back to World War I, with the passage of the Smith-Sears Veterans Rehabilitation Act of 1918. This act worked to establish vocational rehabilitation for returning WWI veterans.

Additionally, the act recognizes the need to provide assistance, if only rehabilitation, to people with disabilities in order to permit their integration into a work force and society. In 1920 the civilian version of the Veterans

Act was passed,"usher(ing) in the federal and state partnership of funding and administering civilian vocational rehabilitation programs" (37). However, even with these clear and focused acts, the course of accessibility was still closed regarding job hiring practices and freedom to utilize public and private services.

It is fitting for this survey and paper that the ADA does not have a substantial root based in the most public of libraries, the Library of Congress.

Drawn from the book *Complying with the Americans with disabilities Act: A Guidebook for Management and People with Disabilities*, by Don Fersh and Peter W. Thomas, Esq., the story of Hugh Gregory Gallagher, a former U.S. Senate legislative aide, adds a personal note to and basis for this landmark civil rights act. Gallagher, "who uses a wheelchair as a result of polio, wanted to conduct research at the Library of Congress" (37). Mr. Gallagher was unable to access, and the LC was unwilling to provide access for a wheelchair into or through the building. "I literally needed an act of Congress to have the ramp installed," stated Mr. Gallagher (38). After this incident Hugh Gallagher was inspired to work for the passage of laws which worked to provide access to federal buildings throughout the United States. These laws were drawn upon to frame the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

With the precedents of these acts and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 the groundwork was clearly laid for the passage of the ADA in 1990. The ADA is the most far reaching and complete in its focus of all anti-discrimination laws ever written. Constructed to provide equal access and freedom of movement to mentally and physically challenged persons, the ADA presents public and private institutions alike the opportunity to provide access in all means possible to the equality of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" promised to all Americans.

Full Methodology

This survey was a product of and conducted with assistance from the Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship, Department of Library Science, Clarion University of Pennsylvania. Additional assistance was provided by Dr. Bernard Vavrek, Jennifer Skovira, Michele Mrazik and Suzann Lawlor.

The researcher worked to compile a survey of pertinent aspects of accessibility to libraries as related to physically and mentally challenged patrons. To this end, a list of questions was formed and placed into four main categories: general interest, physical structure, information structure,

and staff training/staff assistance.

Each survey was printed on white 8-1/2 X 1" letter size paper and stapled in the upper left corner. A listing was made of exactly two-hundred and fifty libraries chosen at random from divided intervals of every seven out of the 2,228 page American Library Directory, 1997 50th edition: Libraries in the United States. The surveys were placed in a letter sized "flat" enveloped with a personally addressed cover letter and self-addressed stamped return letter envelope and mailed to the sampling.

Criteria for meeting the guidelines of the survey were as follows: a public library's meeting a population requirement of 2,500 to 25,000,(a rough calculation for a rural environment) and a location of anywhere in the random selection of public libraries within the United States.

All surveys were addressed to the director of each of the libraries personally and when a director was not named, the term "Attention Director" was used in place of a name.

The compiled bulk of the surveys was mailed first class United States Postal Service mail, on October 28, with a request to be returned by or shortly after November 17, 1997.

Codes were placed on the return envelope of each survey in order to assure the accuracy of returned survey count. However, this code was not placed on the surveys, and no indications are given as to which survey is from which library. The confidentiality of the survey was promised in the cover letter and maintained throughout this process.

The random sampling has yielded 100 responses or 40% of the total mailed surveys returned. Returned surveys were compiled and presented within this paper.

Appendix A Architectural Barriers

Problem

No parking for disabled patrons

No way for disabled patrons to reach the library from the parking lot

Older doors too heavy or narrow or otherwise not suited to easy access for disabled patrons

Shelving too close together not

Tables not accessible to patrons

Emergency exits not wide enough for wheelchairs

No place to provide a study area

Restrooms not wheelchair accessible

Signage placed too high on the walls and bookshelves for patrons to read

Assessment

These changes have provided better access for challenged patrons

Solution

Add parking spaces close to the entrance of library

Add "curb cuts" placed in the most direct line of sight and shortest distance to the main entrance of the library. Ramps may be constructed with the degree or rise equal to 1 inch to every 12 inches in length.

Doors may be replaced with either automatic opening, weight assisted or sliding doors.

Reorganized the floor plan to permit a more open environment; for ease of travel at least 36-40 inches allowed between shelving units

New tables purchased which are at least 30 inches high and 19 inches in depth, permitting patrons in wheelchairs to maneuver more easily under and around the tables.

Exits widened to become wheelchair accessible 36 inches wide, handle height 36 inches off the floor.

Creation of a quiet study area may be just a partition in the corner.

Renovation of the restrooms to provide accessibility, including the installation of handrails 26-28 inches off ground; stall doors opening out; insulated pipes under sinks; levers to replace faucet handles; lower mirrors and paper towel holders

Height of visual signs moved 40 inches above the floor

Goal

To enact other changes as the need is recognized. Actively listen to the needs and concerns of patrons on barriers which inhibit access.

Appendix B

Attitudinal Barriers: Problems and Solutions

Problem:

Staff not familiar with the special needs of challenged patrons.

Solution:

Continuing education program developed:

- (A) Reading recommended highlighting special issues to challenged patrons.
- (B) Advocates for the physically and mentally challenged invited to conduct training sessions.
- (C) Each staff member should attend at least one conference a year concerning libraries and the ADA for meeting the needs of challenged patrons.

Problem:

No input from the disabled community on what the library can work on to provide a more accessible environment.

Solution:

Active search and selection of members of the disabled community who would like to serve on the Friends of the Library and/or the library's board of trustees.

Problem:

How to train volunteers on the special needs of disabled patrons while holding down the cost.

Solution:

Volunteers to be trained by staff who will report on the conferences they have attended. Volunteers should also attend inservice with the staff.

Problem:

How the library can encourage continuing education of the staff and volunteers.

Solution:

The library could provide flex time and monetary assistance to staff seeking further education on issues concerning disabled patrons.

Assessment:

These changes will work to provide better understanding for the special needs and issues concerning challenged patrons as well as the community on the whole.

Goal:

This aspect is an ongoing process which is never completed. It is the hope that through education the libraries' staff and volunteers will be able to provide a higher quality of service to all patrons. This process will be continually monitored.

Appendix C

Format Limitations

Problem:

Few books as well as nonbook materials related to the interests of challenged patrons.

Solution:

Research publishing houses and book suppliers who specialize in or can provide titles of special interest to the challenged community.

Problem:

Large portion of volunteer and staff time spent assisting by reading and searching for material for challenged patrons.

Solution:

Research ways to implement adaptive technology, i.e., computer software readers, enlarging text software, braille printers in addition to books printed in large type (16-18 pt), braille books, and books on tape.

Problem:

Toys for Kids not suitable for physically and mentally challenged children.

Solution:

Research guidelines of safety and durability; examine current toys for failure to meet guidelines. Compile needs list for future toy purchases.

Problem:

Deaf patrons unable to call the library.

Solution:

Research the purchase or rental of TTD and TTY machines for non-voice phone communication.

Problem:

Few books devoted to support roles (parents and teachers of challenged children).

Solution:

Research the acquisition of a special collection devoted to informing teachers and parents and helping them meet their special children's needs.

Problem:

Request for online resources for physically and mentally challenged patrons.

Solution:

Bookmarks to web sites of interest to the challenged community placed on a computer set up for the Internet.

Assessment

With the research and addition of the above books, equipment, and toys, we hope to accumulate a well-rounded collection of resources.

Goal:

To enable persons with the disabilities as well as parents and teachers to freely access information in our library setting.

Appendix D

Funding Limitations

Problem:

Lack of money in which to initiate the much-needed changes and programs.

Solution:

A constant and concerted effort to search-out varies funding opportunities such as:

- (A) Grants; Governmental or Corporate
- (B) Local Government
- (C) State Government
- (D) Local Business
- (E) Fund Drives and Fund Raising Opportunities

Problem:

Lack of knowledge within our library and the community on how to find funding sources.

Solution:

Subscribe to publications and conduct web searches of associations interested in grant funding for special interests.

Problem:

Lack of knowledge within our library and the community of the grant writing process.

Solution:

Subscribe to publications and conduct web searches of associations interested in grant funding for special interests.

Problem:

Constantly shrinking budgets from state and local governments.

Solution:

Host of speakers and training session on grant writing; in addition, working though staff development to educate members of the staff on this specialized need.

Problem:

Rising costs of services, book, utilities, and the unforeseen expenses.

Solution:

Work to build a network of libraries and community groups to exchange ideas, advice, names of possible money saving vendors, and work to urge the donation of time, materials, or service to our nonprofit library.

Assessment:

Through these methods we will diligently work to find new and untapped sources of funding for our library services to our physically and mentally challenged patrons as well as the whole of the community.

Goal:

To provide a constant reliable source or funding for the service, materials, programs, and access to information that our library provides for the community.

Appendix E

Policy Limitations

Problem:

Library not operating under a mission. Purpose was technical administration of the library's tasks.

Solution:

Revisit mission. Rewrite, reevaluate, and implement a mission directed toward the need for service to all members of the community.

Problem:

No job descriptions for librarians or volunteers on file.

Solution:

Revisit position hiring and basic qualifications descriptions. New language added to ensure that discrimination does not occur in any step of the process. Language mirrors that of affirmative action and equal opportunity employer guidelines set forth by the federal government.

Problem:

No harassment policy on file.

Solution:

The adoption of policy outlawing and setting forth grievance, code of conduct, sanctions, and remedies policies regarding any form of harassment in the workplace.

Problem:

Medical, vacation, and family leave policies out of date.

Solution:

The adoption of "family friendly" policy regarding flex time in place of overtime, in addition to an extension of the limit of accrued vacation time for family emergency use.

Assessment:

The aforementioned changes will work to provide a fair and open policy to potential, future, and present staff concerning aspects of a safe, non-discriminatory working environment.

Goal:

To enact other changes, set standards, and work to reach the goals and remedies set forth by the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and guidelines set forth by the federal government in the statutes regarding affirmative action and equal employment.

Appendix F

Lack of Awareness Barriers

Problem:

Physically and mentally challenged patrons unaware of adaptations and changes in the library designed to meet their special needs.

Solution:

Community Outreach Campaign

- (A) Publication and distribution of community newsletter addressing changes in the library.
- (B) Members of the library staff and volunteers attend community organizations and other group functions to publicize changes.
- (C) Production of a web page promoting the library's activities.

Problem:

Community-wide lack of understanding in terms of the needs and abilities of physically and mentally challenged citizens.

Solution:

Library organized/sponsored programs presenting and discussing myths and concerns surrounding physical and mentally challenged citizens.

Problem:

Lack of transportation to the library for challenged patrons.

Solution:

Expanded bookmobile, share-a-ride programs to reach these patrons.

Problem:

Low literacy levels of some patrons within the challenged community.

Solution:

Children's and adult literacy programs to assist improving reading skills.

Problem:

Misconception of what the library could or should do to assist in the experience of physically and mentally challenged patrons of the library.

Solution:

Constant outreach and surveying to assess whether library is meeting the goals spelled out in our mission statement.

Assessment:

The above changes are modeled on the principle that our library has as one of its missions a goal to reach out and educate the entire community on issues of diversity and awareness to the needs and special abilities of all patrons.

Goal:

To assess, add to, and change as the need is recognized, our outreach and education programs to the entire community. In addition, we must work to actively listen to the needs and concerns of all patrons on ways to improve our library service.

Appendix G

Survey of Rural Libraries and the Americans with Disabilities Act

Questionnaire

Please circle or list all the options that best apply to your situation:

- (A) Many communities are working to meet the needs of the physical and mentally challenged. Does your library have the need to face this opportunity?

Yes, we are working to make changes in order to assist disabled patrons.

No, our library already meets the standards recommended by the ADA.

- (B) Does your library have an implementation plan for compliance with the ADA?

Yes No

- (C) If Yes to question(A), has your library utilized a consultant to aid in directing the implementation policy plan?

Yes No

- (D) If Yes to question (A), would you be willing to share a copy of your library's implementation plan?

Yes, I have attached a copy No, thank you

The Library's Physical Structure and the ADA

- (1-A) Has your library made physical changes, inside or outside the library building, to accommodate physically and mentally challenged patrons?

Yes No

* If you answered yes to question (1-A), what changes have been made to your library's physical structure?

(A) Curb Cuts

(B) Ramps (Inside)

(C) Ramps (Outside)

(D) New Signage

(E) Furniture Adjustment

(F) Automatic Doors

(G) Floor Plan Adjustment

(H) Chair Lifts

(I) Parking Lot Configuration

(J) Bathroom Remodeling

Other comments: _____

(1-C) If yes to question (1-A), are other physical improvements planned?

Yes No

(1-D) If yes to question (1-C), please list planned improvements

(1-E) If yes to question (1-A) what has been the approximate amount of money spent altering the library physical structure?

\$ _____ * Over what period of time? _____ (years)

(1-F) If yes to question (1-A), what was the source of funding for the changes?

(A) Library Budgeted Line Item

(B) Grant Funding, please list: _____

(C) Alternative funding source, please list: _____

(1-G) If no to question (1-A) what factors have prevented your library from making physical improvements?

The Library's Informational Structure and the ADA

(2-A) Has your library made changes to accommodate the informational needs of physically and mentally challenged patrons?

Yes No

* If you answered yes to question (2-A), what changes or accommodations have been made to your library's informational structure?

(A) Staff Assistance

(B) Computer Readers

(C) Quiet Study Rooms

(D) Lighting Adjustments

(E) Staff Readers

(F) Captioned Films/Videos

(G) Enlarging Hardware & Software

(H) TTY/TDD Capability

(I) Braille Text, Readers or Printers

(J) Books on Tape

(K) Varied Subject Level Text

(I) Other accommodations

(2-C) If yes to question (2-A), are other informational accommodations or improvements planned?

Yes No

(2-D) If yes to question (2-C), please list planned accommodating changes:

(2-E) If yes to question (2-A), what has been the approximate amount of money spent altering the library to meet informational accommodations?

\$ _____.

(2-F) If yes to questions (2-A), what was the source of funding for the changes?

(A) Library budget line item

(B) Grant Funding, please list: _____

(C) Alternative funding source, please list: _____

(2-G) If no to question (2-A), what factors have prevented your library from making informational accommodations?

Library Staffing and the ADA

(3-A) Has your library provided training to volunteers (and/or) staff on how to better serve physically and mentally challenged patrons?

Volunteers

Staff

Neither

*If you answered neither to question (3-A), please skip to question (3- G).

(3-B) If you circled volunteers or staff in question (3-A), what type of training has been made available to your library's volunteers and staff?

(A) Training on differences of physically and mentally challenged patrons

(B) Training on adaptive technology

(C) Attendance of a conference or workshop

(D) Contact with local groups or individuals

(E) Individual Readings, on your own

- (F) Review of videos
- (G) Role playing exercises
- (H) Other training opportunities: _____

(3-C) If yes to question (3-A), are other training or staff development activities offered:

(3-D) If yes to question (3-C), please list planned training and activities:

(3-E) If yes to question (3-A), what has been the approximate amount of money spent on providing volunteers (and/or) staff training regarding how to better serve physically and mentally challenged patrons?

\$ _____ * Over what period of time? _____(years)

(3-F) If yes to question (3-A), what was the source of funding for the changes?

(A) Library budgeted line item

(B) Grant funding, please list: _____

(C) Alternative funding source, please list: _____

(3-G) If no to question (3-A), what factors have prevented your library from providing volunteer (and/or) staff training regarding how to better serve physically and mentally challenged patrons?

Libraries and the ADA Related Topics

(4) What are some creative or unusual solutions your library was able to utilize in response to the ADA?

(5) Has your library initiated any type of outreach program to the physically and mentally challenged patrons of your community?

Yes No

- (6) If yes to (5), could you list a few examples of how your program operates?
-

- (7) Do you have any general comments on the implementation of the ADA?
-

General Information

- (A) Approximate number of patrons your library serves: _____
- (B) Approximate number of people in your community: _____
- (C) Approximate number of physically and mentally challenged patrons who use your library regularly: _____

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