

AUDRAIN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICES

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

JANUARY 2022

Audrain Developmental Disability Services (ADDS) stands by their mission statement, “Creating a Better Life for Audrain County Citizens,” by developing goals to eliminate barriers in both living and working environments for all employees, stakeholders, persons served, and the public we serve.

Accessibility is a shared responsibility that ADDS upholds and promotes accountability of each employee to ensure that our workplace, our policies, programs, and services are available to those we serve in Audrain County.

INTRODUCTION

Audrain Developmental Disabilities Services (ADDS) makes available to the public, annual plans that indicate how its services will identify and remove barriers to accessibility. In 1998, ADDS completed their first in-house accessibility review. In 2003, Audrain Developmental Disability Services began complying with the first accessibility standard established under the American with Disability Act – Americans with Disability Checklist for Existing Facilities. In 2004, ADDS added Employment Barriers, Transportation Barriers, Communication Barriers, Attitudinal Barriers, and Employment Barriers. Audrain Developmental Disability Services completes an in-house yearly ADA Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal. An external review of accessibility is conducted every three years for all ADDS owned facilities and programs.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The purpose of the Accessibility Plan is to promote accessibility and remove barriers. ADDS addresses accessibility concerns to enhance the quality of life for those served in our programs and services, implement non-discriminatory employment practices, meet legal and regulatory requirements and to meet the expectations of stakeholders in the area of access. This report is a tool that is used to enhance access to programs, services, facilities in the community.

ASSESSMENT OF SITES AND PRACTICES

In order to evaluate accessibility, ADDS examines its identification of barriers in the following areas: architectural (physical), environment, attitudinal, financial, communication, transportation, community integration, technology, and employment.

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ARCHITECTURAL/PHYSICAL

Architectural or physical barriers are generally easy to identify and may include steps to prevent access to a building for and individual who uses a wheelchair or other assistive device, widening narrow walkways and doorways, accessible restrooms, and adding lighted emergency lights for individual who have hearing impairments. Architectural barriers have been identified through internal and external inspections, assessments of need, and employee, stakeholder and person served feedback. The Case Record Review/Safety Committee provides ongoing monitoring of conditions within the organization that serve to improve access. The Case Record Review/Safety committee, Maintenance team, and Administration conduct quarterly short-term and long-term planning that routinely includes assessment of architectural needs and related cost analysis.

Please note that an outside licensed contractor completed our outside Accessibility Review this year, the report is attached at the conclusion of this plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Environmental barriers can be interpreted as any location or characteristic of the agency setting that compromises, hinders, or impedes service delivery and the benefits that are gained. Some service sites may be located in areas where the person served and/or personnel do not feel safe or feel that confidentiality may be risked. In addition to such external environmental barriers, internal barriers may include noise level, lack of sound proofing high traffic areas for service delivery or type or lack of furnishing that may impact comfort level of the person served and personnel.

Lighting could be a barrier, for instance, if fluorescent lighting is used and the flicker precipitates seizure activity in an individual. The physical office environment could be a barrier if it is noisy or is a very open structure and an individual is easily distracted by noise. Fragrances could be considered an environmental barrier as many persons could have an allergic reaction to various smells or may not perform at their best under those conditions.

Environmental Barriers

Goal: To increase the evidence of decoration throughout ADDS services that reflect the cultural customs of person served.

Objective: Placement of art throughout the facility that reflects the diversity of our consumer population including African American and other cultural representations

Completion Date: Ongoing

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ATTITUDINAL

Attitudinal barriers may include the terminology and language that the organization uses in literature, the agency website, communication means with individuals with disabilities, other stakeholders, and the public. Attitudinal barriers may also include how individuals with disabilities are viewed and treated by the organization, the families, and the community.

ADDS conducts annual satisfaction surveys. These surveys are given to persons served, guardians, stakeholders, and staff to make sure all services are appropriate, and concerns are documented for future correction if applicable.

To educate staff on the advantages of eliminating behaviors and provide opportunities for people with disabilities, ADDS provides Quality Outcomes and Positive Behavior Supports Training annually for all staff.

Attitudinal Barriers

Goal: Increase community awareness of the organization's mission and programs and services provided.

Plan: Obtain input from staff regarding opportunities for education and implement as feasible.

Completion Date: Ongoing

Goal: Reduce attitudinal barriers in our literature and publications. Use these publications to increase community awareness of person first communication, as well as promote the agency's mission.

Plan: Publish Quarterly Newsletters for staff and stakeholders (Biannual Community Newsletters).

Completion Date: Ongoing

Goal: Utilize social media to improve communication with staff and community stakeholders

Plan: Continue to update website and Facebook page with person first language and advocacy efforts.

Completion Date: Ongoing

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FINANCIAL

Our agency must prepare yearly for threats to our funding and budget restrictions. All needs for person served must be met, therefore, continuously exploring funding sources and utilizing existing resources to help meet the needs is vital.

ADDS seeks to reduce and/or eliminate financial threats that could restrict the ability for eligible consumers to access any services consistent with the needs and preferences.

Financial Barriers

Goal: To maintain financial stability across each of the programs and to provide services to meet the needs of the person served.

Plan: Closely monitor budget and target a six-month operating reserve to better respond to possible deficits in the future.

Completion Date: Ongoing

Goal: ADDS closely monitors monthly and quarterly budgets in order to maintain financial efficiency and identify any budgetary threats that might restrict the ability to provide services to all eligible customers or potentially prevent access to any services consistent with their needs and preferences.

Plan: Closely monitor Program budgets and prepare Quarterly Comparisons to track budget routinely.

Completion Date: Ongoing

TRANSPORTATION

ADDS seeks to ensure that persons served are not limited by a lack of transportation, by assuring there are accessible means of transportation available to meet the needs of the person served and their disabilities. ADDS has nine vehicles to meet the specialized transportation needs of the person served. Transportation includes six vehicles with wheelchair lifts and two lowered minivans with a ramp. The vehicles are used to transport person served to places of employment, medical appointments, volunteer jobs, daily living needs, extracurricular activities, and any other activities they may choose to participate in.

Transportation Barriers

Goal: Provide transportation to all person served for work, day program, medical and daily living.

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Plan: Inspect vehicles routinely and maintain vehicles. Replace with new vehicles as needed.

Completion Date: Ongoing

Goal/Situation: The city does not have public transportation. They do have private taxi service that is expensive and not reliable.

Plan: Continue to maintain agency vehicles and apply through MoDOT for available grants to maintain/expand services as able. Ensure budget is properly funded for upkeep and the possibility of purchasing new vehicles to meet the needs of person served.

Completion Date: Ongoing

EMPLOYMENT

Goal: To recruit and retain minority staff or staff with disabilities. ADDS is an equal opportunity employer. ADDS strives to maintain a diverse workforce sensitive to the unique needs of person served and the community.

Plan: Recruit talented/capable employees including disabled and minority staff for employment in ADDS services and meet accessibility requirements in the following areas:

- Recruitment processes
- Employee accommodation and supports
- Accommodation where needed for employees returning to work after extended medical leave
- Support employees who requested and/or receive employment accommodation, relative to performance management, career development and redeployment.

COMMUNICATIONS

Education, information, and communication are critical factors in building relationships with individuals, families, providers, and other stakeholders who have an interest in the supports and services that are provided by Audrain Development Disability Services. Limited communications and information about services, how to access services, interpreting complex eligibility requirements, and how to navigate the complex system of services for people with disabilities can create significant barriers.

Goal: To increase the availability of the information regarding the organization's services, programs and outcomes to persons served, employees and community stakeholders.

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Plan: Publication of quarterly newsletters to employees and persons served and provide a newsletter to community members twice a year. Maintain an up-to-date website and Facebook page.

Completion Date: Ongoing

Plan: Each specific program sets goals for better performance throughout the fiscal year.

Objective: Monthly Board Meetings are posted and open to the public for input.

Completion Date: Ongoing

Goal: ADDS seeks to provide materials that are in a language or format that is understood by the customer and telecommunication for individuals who are deaf.

Plan: Maintain Apple iPad's for Facetime or Skype technology and downloaded software and literature to help staff with sign language. Contract in place for ASL interpretation.

Completion Date: Ongoing

Goal: To educate Persons receiving serves on rights and how to advocate for themselves and others

Plan: Monthly Social Advocacy Group, Friendship for Life, meeting to educate Persons Served on their rights and provide activities for Persons Served to learn to advocate for themselves and others.

Completion Date: Ongoing

TECHNOLOGY

Technology Barriers

Goal: To keep up with evolving technology, the upkeep of equipment and assistive technology.

Plan: Closely monitor the budget and allow for new technology, new equipment and any assistive technology needs that arise.

Completion Date: Ongoing

COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

Community Integration Barriers

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Goal: To eliminate any barriers that would keep the person served from participating in the community.

Plan: Monitor each person served and their abilities allowing them full participation in the community

Completion Date: Ongoing

COMMUNICATION OF THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

ADDS will create an annual report in writing. Copies of the Accessibility Plan will be made available upon request to person served, employees, stakeholders, and the public.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN BARRIERS

Goal: Complete an Accessibility Checklist in house when needed for additional new facilities.

Plan: ADDS strives to provide services in fully accessible facilities. ADDS strives to reduce any location or characteristic of a setting that compromises, hinders, or impedes service delivery and the benefits to be gained. ADDS also believes that the environment in which services are provided reflect the cultures and cultural customers of the person served and are conducive to providing a comfortable and confidential setting for person served and employees to achieve the highest potential.

Goal: Participate in full external Accessibility (ADA) Review every three years.

Plan: As the agency can find an outside source to complete Accessibility, this enables the Agency to have an outside source review the accessibility needs of the agency.

OVERALL

There may be barriers identified that ADDS does not have the authority or recourses to remove; effective accommodations may be the appropriate action to be taken in those circumstances.

ADDS may identify short-term and long-term actions to be taken. Barrier removal that is not currently achievable may be achievable later when the organization has investigated and obtained the necessary resources for removal of the identified barrier(s). ADDS planning may have options for referral to and the use of other generic services that may be more accessible.