



MOPD

Mayor's Office For
People With Disabilities

Providing Access to Reproductive Health Care

Why this is important

Many more people seeking reproductive health care and abortion care will be coming to Illinois. **This may include people with disabilities.** People with disabilities can include those who are blind/low vision, deaf/hard of hearing, have intellectual or developmental disabilities or use wheelchairs or have mobility disabilities. Many individuals with disabilities may have more than one disability. This guide includes some helpful tips and is a starting point, not intended to be a comprehensive resource.

Applicable laws

Health care agencies run by state and local governments are covered under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Health care organizations run by private businesses or nonprofit organizations are covered under Title III of the ADA; **all entities covered by the ADA must provide access to their facilities and programs for people with disabilities.** This means that the physical buildings must be accessible to individuals who use a wheelchair or other mobility devices or have physical disabilities. It also means that the services must be accessible. Other federal and state laws apply, including Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Illinois Human Rights Act, and the City of Chicago Human Rights Ordinance.

Communicating with people with disabilities

- **It's important to communicate that your organization is open and welcoming to people with disabilities.** This can be accomplished by:

- Including on your website that you provide accessibility and have awareness of disability
- Having images of people with disabilities on the website
- Post on your website language such as: “If you are coming to our organization for a visit, let us know at the time of making your appointment what accessibility you need”
- Include contact information for your organization’s designated point person on accessibility and include both a phone number and email address in an easy to find location
- **On your intake form, include the following suggested language:**
 - Do you have a disability? If yes, please state what your disability is.
 - What accessibility do you need?
 - Use appropriate and current terminology. Best practices on terminology are here.

Physical access

- **Transportation:** often times, transportation is not accessible to people with disabilities. If any transportation is arranged, be sure to make sure it is accessible, including checking to make sure there is a lift or a ramp available.
- **Building access:** ensure that your building entrance and building interior are accessible
 - If there is an elevator in your building, ensure that it is in working order.
 - If there are stairs to enter the building, identify alternate accessible routes into the building that can provide access.
 - If there is an elevator or lift in your building, ensure that it is in working order. Where parking is provided, accessible parking must also be available.
- **Some barriers include:**
 - Narrow doorways at the clinic
 - Level changes
 - Inaccessible toilet rooms
 - Inaccessible examination tables
 - Lack of alternate ways to obtain measurements for individuals not able to stand

- If paths of travel into the building need to be changed at short notice, make every effort to ensure that an accessible path of travel is available
- **MOPD's Accessibility Compliance Unit (ACU)** can provide technical assistance regarding accessibility, and can be reached by e-mailing MOPDCompliance@cityofchicago.org, or by telephone at (312)744-4441. More information available at: <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/mopd/provdrs/comply.html>

Deaf/hard of hearing

- Keep in mind that not all deaf and hard of hearing individuals communicate in the same way. Some only use American Sign Language, some only use their voice, some use a combination of both.
- **Some requests you may get include:**
 - ASL interpretation
 - Tactile interpreter (for individuals who are DeafBlind)
 - Cued speech interpreter
 - Real time captioning
 - A request to communicate in writing or use of voice to text apps such as "Otter" or "Google Live Transcribe"
- **Some tips for how to use an ASL interpreter:**
 - Talk at your typical speech pattern, although if you talk too fast, please slow down
 - Make eye contact with the deaf person, not the interpreter
 - Address the deaf person in the first person (avoid saying "tell her that..")

See the Resources Section for how to obtain an ASL interpreter or real time captioner.

Blind/low vision

- **Have materials available in a variety of formats, including:**
 - Braille
 - Large print

- Electronic
- Large print is a sans serif font such as Arial, in 18-22 size font. Some individuals may request that any forms and documents are read – find a staff person or volunteer to sit with the individual and read what is on the paper and provide any requested guidance on completing paperwork, if no alternate, accessible format is available.
- Websites – be sure that your website is accessible and compatible with screen readers

Intellectual/developmental disabilities

- **General tips:**
 - Don't assume that the individual is not able to provide informed consent for themselves
 - Address the individual directly and make every effort to honor the individual's autonomy and ability to participate in their care
- **Permit a support person to accompany the individual. This might be a:**
 - Guardian
 - Family member
 - Caregiver
 - Paid support worker
- Have materials available in plain language format

Service animals

- The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) defines service animals as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities, such as:
 - Guiding individuals who are blind
 - Providing alerts to individuals who are deaf
 - Pulling a wheelchair
 - Alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure
 - Providing reminders to an individual with mental illness to take medications
 - Calming an individual with PTSD during an anxiety attack

- If an individual with a disability uses a service animal, service animals are allowed to accompany the individual with a disability in all areas of the medical facility, unless:
 - The animal is not within the handler’s control (i.e. leashed)
 - They are in areas where there are infection control measures such as in operating rooms and burn units where the animal’s presence may compromise a sterile field environment

Resources

- Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD): <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/mopd.html>
- Health Care and the Americans with Disabilities Act (published by ADA National Network): <https://adata.org/factsheet/health-care-and-ada#:~:text=Health%20care%20organizations%20that%20provide,Policies%2C%20Practices%2C%20and%20Procedures>
- Understanding How to Accommodate Service Animals in Health Care Facilities (published by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services): <http://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/abc/Pages/service-animals.aspx>
- Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (published by HHS): <https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-individuals/section-1557/index.html>
- Center for American Progress, Reproductive Justice for Disabled Women, April 13, 2022: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/reproductive-justice-for-disabled-women-ending-systemic-discrimination/#:~:text=Reproductive%20and%20disability%20justice%20are,environment%3B%20the%20right%20to%20access>
- Covid-19 Support Persons in Health Care Facilities (including hospitals), for Individuals who have Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (published by the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities): <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/icdd/Announcements/SitePages/NewsArticleDisplay.aspx?NewsID=12>
- Chicago-Area ASL Interpreter Agencies: ASL interpreters can be requested for onsite appointments, which will provide an optimal experience for all parties. If it is a last minute request or if the list of onsite interpreters has been exhausted, consider providing ASL interpretation via video remote interpreting. Your organization will need to provide a laptop with a webcam and audio, and access to high speed internet (ethernet connection is recommended as Wi-Fi may not provide a clear video screen). Be sure to let the agency know you are requesting an interpreter for a medical appointment.

- Chicago Hearing Society, onsite and Virtual Remote Interpreting:
www.Chicagohearingsociety.org
- Chicago Area Interpreter Referral Service (CAIRS), onsite: www.Cairs.net
- First Choice Interpreting, onsite and Video Remote Interpreting:
www.Firstchoiceinterpreting.com
- Pro Bono ASL: www.Probonoasl.com
- Real Time Captioning: can be provided onsite, or virtually. The captioner will need access to audio being said in the room. The patient can view the captioning on an iPad or laptop, if reliable internet is available.
 - Chicago Area real time captioners:
 - Cathy Rajcan, Efficiency Reporting: crajcan@efficiencyreporting.com
 - Jo Gayle: jigcsr@gmail.com
 - Tina Dillon: Tina@dillonreporting.com, Tina660@sbcglobal.net
 - LeAnn Hibler, lmhreporting@aol.com
- Braille: to have materials available in braille, send in advance to Horizons for the Blind
 - <https://www.horizons-blind.org/braille/>
 - Cost: \$25/hour to set up the file, \$0.10 per page for Braille copies
- Inclusive Terminology (created by MOPD):
https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/mopd/supp_info/guidelines_for_writingandreportingaboutpeoplewithdisabilities.html
- MOPD's Accessibility Compliance Unit (ACU) can provide technical assistance regarding accessibility, and can be reached by e-mailing MOPDCompliance@cityofchicago.org, or by telephone at (312)744-4441. More information available at: <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/mopd/provdrs/comply>