



CITY OF HAMMOND, LOUISIANA

Section 504 Evaluation & Transition Plan and Summary of Previous & New Actions Taken

Updated: July 2022
March 2020
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February 2012

COMMITMENT TO SECTION 504, ADA, & NONDISCRIMINATION

The City of Hammond is committed to complying with the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Section 504), and with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA), to the extent that these provisions and regulations may be held to apply to municipal governments.

This policy extends to all programs, activities, and services which are conducted either by the City or by other agencies, institutions, organizations, or entities to which financial assistance is made available by the City through subgrants, contracts, assistance in any form, or other arrangements using federal funds.

EVALUATION—DEFINITIONS & PROCEDURE

The City of Hammond has developed a Section 504 Program in compliance with Section 504.

The City's Human Resources Director has been appointed as Section 504/ADA Coordinator for this Program and has assisted in the self-evaluations performed by the City, the Mayor, the Human Resources Department, the Building Department, the Public Works Department, and Jim McInnis (handicapped contact) from the Police Department in 2012 and 2014. Additionally, representatives from the Council on Aging, Hammond Weed & Seed, and Options were consulted for their advice about best practices and accommodation strategies.

Generally, the City offers all programs, activities, and services, including public hearings and meetings, in locations and facilities that are fully and easily accessible. Most of the City's programs, activities, services, and meetings are held in the Michael J. Kenney Community Center, the United Way/Social Services Building, Hammond City Council Chambers, and the Safe Haven Community Center.

"Physical or mental impairment" is defined, for purposes of this Plan, as follows:

1. A physical impairment is any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of twelve body systems. They are the neurological, musculoskeletal, respiratory (including the speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic (blood), lymphatic and endocrine systems; special sense organs;

and skin. Some examples are physical autism, blindness, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

2. A mental impairment is any mental or psychological disorder. Such disorders would include mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, specific learning disabilities, drug addiction, and alcoholism.

Alcoholics and drug abusers are not included in the definition of individuals with handicaps when their substance abuse prevents them from participating in programs, activities, or services or when their participation poses a threat to property or the safety of others due to their alcohol or drug abuse.

Evaluation of City Facilities

As part of the Section 504 Program, the City has made all City facilities accessible to the handicapped. In addition to past improvements to access and parking, the City has added additional policies impacting hearing- and sight-impaired persons and has evaluated all City property for Section 504 compliance.

The **list of the City buildings evaluated** includes the following.

- City Hall offices, including City Council Chambers
- Criminal Justice Building, including Jail and Evidence Buildings
- Police Headquarters (New) and Police Training Center
- Hammond Northshore Regional Airport Terminal
- Michael J. Kenney Center
- United Way/Social Services Building
- Maintenance Facility
- Robert Street Building
- Fire Administration Building and Fire Stations (5)
- Park facilities, including those in Cate Park, Clarke Park, Jackson Park (New), Martin Luther King Park, Mooney Park, and Zemurray Park
- Safe Haven Community Center
- Levy Building
- Miller Memorial Library

Parking

All of these City facilities are properly served and marked for handicapped parking. Signs are 3-4' high in front of each parking space, and the pavement is also marked with the handicap symbol in blue paint. Access is provided from parking lots to buildings via sidewalks and ramps. No curbs impede easy access from City parking lots to building entrances.

Routes, Pathways, Sidewalks

The routes leading from parking lots to entrances are at least 36" wide and 80" high with a continuous smooth surface. No trees, power lines, or other signs/hanging objects obtrude the routes. All handicap entrances are clearly marked. All sidewalks leading from parking lots to entrances have the proper slope with less than 1/2" and avoid any gaps in pavement of more than 1/4". If any drainage grates or catch basins are within the paved portion of the sidewalk, the grates are traverse of the sidewalk path. All steps and stairs are accessible via a ramp nearby. The ramps include truncated domes and color to visually distinguish the surface from the parking lot or paved sidewalk.

Building Entrances

All entrances and exits to buildings should have a minimum doorway opening of 32", ramps where necessary, with non-slip surfaces, and doorways or doorsills free from extreme slopes or abrupt changes in surface level. No buildings use revolving doors or turn-styles. The hardware used to open the building door is at a height of 48" and is operated by push/pull or by lever, depending on the door.

Interior Access

Interior access throughout the buildings is provided through easily accessible pathways that vary from 48" to 80" depending on the building and organization of hallways and office cubicles. The only City building with an elevator is the Criminal Justice building. The elevator is fully accessible with a minimum of 51" opening door, control panels centered with the highest button at 48" and with elevator doors that remain open for 15 seconds. The second floor of City Hall is not accessible via an elevator; however, all services offered on the second floor are moved to the first floor if needed by anyone requiring accommodations. These instances have been few and far between.

Auxiliary Services—Restrooms, Drinking Fountains, Telephones

Several buildings have restrooms that have been upgraded by the City and access to them is acceptable. Handicap-accessible restrooms are marked with universal sign. Doorways, stalls, hardware, toilet stalls, sinks, and grab bars are accessible. Public drinking fountains and telephones are accessible to handicapped, except for one public telephone at the airport terminal and one public telephone at the Police Department. The phone cords stretch far enough that accommodations can be made when requested in these buildings. The drinking fountain in the Robert Street Building is not accessible; however, a water cooler is located 20' from the fountain and is low enough and operational for those using wheelchairs.

Louisiana Relay Service

Individuals with hearing impairments and/or limited English proficiency may also communicate with the City through the FREE Louisiana Relay Service by calling 711 or 1-888-550-5277 (ASCII), 1-800-846-5277 (TDD/TTY) or 1-800-947-5277 (voice), 1-888-272-5530 (STS), or 1800-737-1813 (Spanish). The City also publishes annual notices about this relay system in *The Daily Star* newspaper and displays this notice at City Hall.

Warning Signals

Entrances are marked with EXIT signs that remain lit and are of a type font and size easy to read. Fire alarms are visual and audible.

Meeting and Conference Areas

Meeting and conference areas are available in each public building with accessible doorways, table tops, and seats for those using wheelchairs. The City Council Chambers is fully accessible and is most often used for public meetings. Additional meetings are held at the Michael J. Kenney Community Center and Safe Haven Community Center, which are also fully accessible.

TRANSITION PLAN

General Policies: The City of Hammond has adopted the Section 504 Grievance Procedure included herein for individuals who are not employees of the City (the grievance procedure for employees of the City is set forth in the City's Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual for City Employees, separately adopted from this Plan). It provides for a grievance to be lodged with the Section 504/ADA Coordinator, who is the Human Resources Director (985-277-5628 or PO Box 2788, Hammond LA 70404-2788 or 219 E Robert St, Hammond LA 70401-3349, Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.). Appeals are sent to the Director of

Administration (985-277-5653 or PO Box 2788, Hammond LA 70404-2788 or 310 E Charles St, Hammond LA 70401-3324, Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.).

The City includes in all meeting notices and agendas that reasonable accommodations shall be provided to anyone wishing to attend and participate in City Council or other City meetings upon 3 days prior notice. Accommodations are requested either to the Section 504/ADA Coordinator or to the City Council Clerk depending on the type of meeting. Meeting notices and agendas (and many other City documents) are also available in **alternative formats** (e.g. electronic formats) on the City's website or through the departments that originated them.

The City publishes nondiscrimination notices in *The Daily Star* newspaper and displays these notices at City Hall.

The City also trains its employees who interact or communicate with the public, who establish or implement programs, activities, or services, or who maintain facilities, regarding the City's responsibilities under Section 504.

Communications

The City has taken active steps to ensure effective communications between the City and handicapped individuals.

Actions to promote accessible communications include the following:

1. A public notice shall be published, at least annually, in *The Daily Star* newspaper informing the public of the relay numbers used by the City. The City has also notified the public as to the availability of this Plan and evaluation.
2. Consultation with handicapped persons and agencies who have suggested ideas for improving access and communication.
3. Persons with impaired vision or hearing may also receive any needed information by contacting the Section 504/ADA Coordinator or another appropriate City staff person, as appointed by the Mayor.
4. The City Council has determined that these activities are not a burden and can be implemented with no financial hardship.
5. Proper public notification concerning nondiscrimination in access to public facilities, programs, activities, and services. Such notification relating to nondiscrimination based upon handicap status shall be publicly posted and shared with City employees, as well as organizations or individuals with whom the City may do business. Notification shall take place on at least an annual basis.
6. The City shall communicate with citizens having hearing, speech, or vision impairments through use of a TDD/TTY device, use of staff who know sign language, and reading/interpretation of documents for the blind. This communication shall be through the Human Resources Department.

Employment

To the extent that Section 504 or ADA apply to employment by the City, a Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual for City Employees has been separately adopted from this Plan and is to be consulted and shall control the application of Section 504 or ADA as it relates to City employees.

Physical Accessibility

No qualified individual with handicaps shall, because the City's facilities are inaccessible to or unusable by individuals with handicaps, be denied the benefits of, be excluded from participation in, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program, activity, or service that receives Federal financial assistance.

Alterations to existing non-housing facilities shall, to the maximum extent feasible, be made to be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with handicaps. For purposes of this paragraph, the phrase "to the maximum extent feasible" shall not be interpreted as requiring that the City make a non-housing facility, or element thereof, accessible if doing so would impose undue financial and administrative burdens on the operation of the City's program, activity, or service.

The City shall operate each program, activity, or service receiving Federal financial assistance so that the program, activity, or service, when viewed in its entirety, is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with handicaps. However, this paragraph does not –

- Necessarily require the City to make each of its existing non-housing facilities accessible to and usable by individuals with handicaps;
- In the case of historic preservation programs, activities, or services, require the City to take any action that would result in a substantial impairment of significant historic features of an historic property; or
- Require the City to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of its program, activity, or service or in undue financial and administrative burdens. If an action would result in such an alteration or such burdens, the City shall take any action that would not result in such an alteration or such burdens, but would nevertheless ensure that individuals with handicaps receive the benefits and services of the program, activity, or service.

New non-housing facilities shall be designed and constructed to be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with handicaps.

Grievance Procedure

This Grievance Procedure is established to meet the requirements of Section 504 and ADA.

The City certifies that all citizens shall have the right to submit a grievance for perceived discrimination on the basis of disability in policies or practices related to employment, programs, activities, services, facilities, or benefits provided by the City.

City employees must follow the grievance procedure set forth in the City's Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual for City Employees, separately adopted from this Plan.

Individuals who are not City employees must follow the grievance procedure set forth below.

The complainant must provide detailed information to allow an investigation including the date, the location, and a description of the perceived discrimination. The grievance must be in writing and must include the name, address, and telephone number of the complainant. Upon request, alternative means of filing a complaint (e.g. personal interview, recording) shall be made available for individuals with

disabilities. The complaint should be submitted by the complainant or his/her designee as soon as possible, but no later than 90 days after the perceived discrimination. Complaints must be signed and sent to the Section 504/ADA Coordinator:

Diana Guzman-McMahon
Human Resources Director
219 E Robert St
PO Box 2788
Hammond LA 70404-2788
985-277-5626
711 or 1-800-846-5277 (TDD/TTY)

Within 15 calendar days after receiving the complaint, the Section 504/ADA Coordinator shall meet with the complainant to discuss his/her complaint and possible resolution. Within 15 calendar days after this meeting the Section 504/ADA Coordinator shall respond in writing and/or, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant (e.g. large print, a recording). The response shall explain the position of the City and offer options for resolving the complaint.

If the response by the Section 504/ADA Coordinator does not satisfactorily resolve the complaint, the complainant or his/her designee may appeal the decision to

Lacy Landrum
Director of Administration
310 E Charles St
PO Box 2788
Hammond LA 70404-2788
985-277-5653
711 or 1-800-846-5277 (TDD/TTY)

Appeals must be made within 15 calendar days after the complainant has received the Section 504/ADA Coordinator's response.

Within 15 calendar days after receiving the appeal, the Director of Administration shall meet with the complainant to discuss his/her complaint and possible resolution. Within 15 calendar days after this meeting, the Director of Administration shall provide a response in writing and/or, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant (e.g. large print, a recording). This response shall be accompanied by a final resolution of the complaint.

The Section 504/ADA Coordinator shall maintain the files and records of the City related to any/all complaints filed for a minimum of 3 years. Where the perceived discrimination was related to a federally-funded program, activity, service, facility, or benefit provided by the City, the Section 504/ADA Coordinator shall maintain these files and records for the duration of the federal funding + 3 years.

Other Complaint Procedures for Individuals Who Are Not City Employees

Individuals or classes of individuals who believe they have been subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability have a right to prompt and equitable resolution—including by filing a complaint with a responsible federal agency (e.g. the federal agency funding the program, activity, service, facility, or benefit provided by the City) by or filing a lawsuit. A grievance or complaint is not required to bring a

lawsuit; lawsuits may be filed at any time. The following is a list of the federal agencies where a complaints for perceived discrimination on the basis of disability may be filed:

Complaints Adjudication Division
Office of Advocacy and Enterprise
Department of Agriculture
14th & Independence Ave SW Rm 1353
Washington DC 20250

Office for Civil Rights
Department of Education
330 C Street SW Ste 5000
Washington DC 20202

Office for Civil Rights
Department of Health & Human Services
330 Independence Ave SW
Washington DC 20201

Assistant Secretary
for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity
Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th St SW Rm 5100
Washington DC 20410

Office for Equal Opportunity
Office of the Secretary
Department of the Interior
18th & C St NW
Washington DC 20547

Coordination and Review Section
Civil Rights Division
Department of Justice
PO Box 66118
Washington DC 20035-6118

Directorate of Civil Rights
Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave NW Rm N-4123
Washington DC 20210

Office for Civil Rights
Office of the Secretary
Department of Transportation
400 Seventh St SW Rm 10215
Washington DC 20590

Compliance Actions and Timetable

As mentioned in the Evaluation section, all City buildings, facilities, and parking sites have met Section 504 standards. These sites need to be maintained to stay in compliance. All Section 504 violations or public suggestions about the Section 504 Standards delineated in the Evaluation section of this Plan or disagreements with the Plan should be addressed to the Section 504/ADA Coordinator or the Director of Administration.

Public Access and Input

The City shall notify the public at least one (1) time per year as to the availability of this Plan. It shall be available at City Hall for review by any interested party. The City shall also annually notify the public of the availability of any relay number that may be used to comment on the Plan.

Amendments to the Plan

Amendments to the Plan should be reviewed, written, and prepared by the City Administration, then directed to the City Council for discussion and adoption.

Pete Panepinto, Mayor

Date