

**Minutes of the**  
[Advisory Board on the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)  
**10:00 a.m.**  
**Tuesday, September 20, 2016**  
**Community Court**  
**80 Washington Street, Hartford, CT**

**Board members in attendance:** Chief Court Administrator Judge Patrick L. Carroll III, Chair, Ms. Isabel Alvarez, Atty. Mark Ciarciello, Ms. Doreen Del Bianco, Mr. Charles Epstein, Ms. Kristen Giantonio, Mr. Michael Hines, Ms. Sandra Lugo-Gines, Mr. Ron Macchio, Atty. Deirdre McPadden, Ms. Mary Sitaro, Atty. Thomas Smith, Atty. Cynthia Theran. Also attending: Deputy Chief Court Administrator Judge Elliot Solomon; Atty. Joseph D. D'Alesio; legal advisors to the Board Attorneys Viviana Livesay and Maureen Finn; support staff Ms. Heather Collins, and Mr. Daniel P. Irace and Ms. Regina Picard of the Superior Court Operations ADA Coordinator's office.

**Absent:** Atty. Pamela Meotti.

- I. Welcome:** Judge Carroll welcomed the Board's newest members, Ms. Del Bianco of External Affairs, and Ms. Kristen Giantonio of the IT Division. Judge Carroll also noted that Mr. Macchio will be succeeded by Ms. Laura Jovino as representative, with Atty. Ciarciello, from the Administrative Division.
- II. Approval of the Draft Minutes of the March 2015 Meeting:** The minutes were approved with no changes.
- III. Update on training:**
  - Ms. Lugo Gines, along with Mr. Irace and Ms. Collins told the Board that Information Sessions are being in every Judicial District, for all Branch staff from every division, on the basics of [Title II accommodations](#) for the public. Invitations will also be issued to public defenders and prosecutors when the sessions are held at courthouses.
  - Vicarious Trauma: This training, funded by a grant from the State Justice Institute, was completed at the end of June. In all, some 350 employees attended the training.
  - Popcorn and Possibilities is resuming and will be presented during the Branch's Diversity Week, and going forward, by Ms. Lugo Gines and Ms. Collins.
  - Service Animals: The SCO office is developing an online version of the *Service Animals 101* training, which can be completed in about an hour. There was discussion about whether the comprehensive "*Nuts and Bolts of the ADA*" can be transformed into an online version.
  - Atty. Theran and Ms. Alvarez told the Board that attendance by CSSD staff at ADA training is sharply up over the last year, with more than 600 employees having attended: Vicarious Trauma, Nuts & Bolts, Service Animals 101, and/or Popcorn & Possibilities.
  - Judge Carroll reminded the Board members to encourage employees who enroll in training classes via the Learning Management System to attend the training, or drop the class, which will allow another person to attend.

- Judge Carroll told the Board that the Judicial Branch will soon launch the next phase of its Strategic Plan which will in part focus on the Branch's human capital. The Board has in the past talked about the need to develop training for employees on their rights under Title I of the ADA. Judge Carroll said he will invite Deputy Director Kathleen Gensheimer of the Admin. Division, who is also a Human Capital Workgroup member, to join the Advisory Board.

- IV. General discussion** on the diaspora of requests being received: Ms. Lugo Gines spoke about the variety of requests that the Branch is receiving, including: assistance for a person with a physical disability, and a situation where a person with throat cancer, who was unable to speak, had their responses read aloud for them by a staff member in a proceeding. Requests for people with mental illness and other hidden disabilities are on the rise. Attorneys Finn and Livesay noted there are revisions to the confidentiality agreement for non-party, non-attorneys who support self-represented parties for proceedings that are not open to the public, or where confidential, non-public information will be shared. The agreement requires the non-party to disclose his or her full name, address, phone number, and to sign the agreement indicating they understand they are subject to sanctions by the Court if they reveal confidential information.
- The Board discussed the status of wheelchairs that are housed in Branch facilities. A 2014 Judicial Marshal Services policy addresses the custody of prisoners who need wheelchairs. Mr. Epstein will discuss with the JMS director the need to do an inventory of the wheelchairs. The Judicial Branch is not required to provide wheelchairs to the public, as it is an item of a personal nature not required by the ADA.
- V. Sign language Interpreter Update:** Ms. Lugo Gines told the Board that the Branch recently solicited bids for sign language providers, to help expand the pool of available providers in light of the closing of the state Department of Rehabilitative Services' sign language unit. Further, the Branch is also going to pilot a Video Remote Sign Language Interpretation project, at a location to be determined.
- VI. Update from Facilities:** Mr. Macchio provided an update on an assessment of areas used by jurors in 18 of the oldest courthouses across the state. The assessment for the Branch via the state Department of Administrative Services (DAS) , by Northeast Collaborative Architects evaluated accessibility for jurors with disabilities and considered the juror's path of travel from the time they arrive at a courthouse, through orientation, and movement throughout the facilities as a juror. The report lists a variety of suggested improvements. The Branch will focus its immediate efforts on improving ADA access to jury assembly areas and restrooms in six locations in Bridgeport, Danbury, Hartford, New Haven, New London, and Waterbury, and is asking the state Bond Commission for \$100,000 to design the improvements. Further, he noted, the Branch is seeking \$2.5 million annually from the state budget to continue improving juror accessibility.
- VII. Schedule next meeting:** Ms. Collins will submit a variety of dates in December to the Board. The meeting will be noticed and posted.