

ADA Focus Group 3 – December 18, 2008

	BARRIERS	IMPACTS	SUGGESTIONS
<p>Need to improve physical access and information about access</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of handicapped parking at New Britain courthouse • Need to have advance notice that there is a long walk to court rooms; some people cannot easily walk • No automatic doors: How do I get in? I feel unwelcome • Signage lacks distance to courtrooms and conference rooms • Too few parking spaces at Tolland Courthouse • Lack of or unclear areas of handicapped parking • Inaccessibility at courthouses: handicap signage telling distance of parking to entrances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourages participation • People miss out • Triggers depression and feelings of exclusion • Heightens anxiety • Deprives people of the right to participate • Frustration • Impairs self-esteem • Fatigue—emotional • Fatigue—physical from lip reading • Unfairly penalizes people for tardiness that's beyond control • Negative outcomes on cases • Barriers to Branch employment: transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralized assistance—a central office where a person with a disability can go or get help from • Need for one-on-one advocates • Add e-mail to ways of accommodation request (currently faxable or mailable form), plus PDF forms that can be filled in online • Offer ADA services UP FRONT by telling consumers, jurors, parties, etc what Branch has available in accommodations, either through emails, mailings, on the website • Communicate to the public what services are available by providing on signs at Branch facilities • Make website fully accessible for deaf and HOH with sound, also, easier to physically navigate, and larger font for vision impaired
<p>Staff training needed on ADA laws and rights, cultural competency, and attitudes of Branch employees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No knowledge of ADA law or the rights of the disabled • Court clerk had to be shown Judicial's website to prove responsibility for Branch to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourages participation • People miss out • Triggers depression and feelings of exclusion • Heightens anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train judges and staff on sensitivity, ADA, etiquette, do's and don't, personal space issues. Make it annual and include disabled and

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BARRIERS

- request/provide interpreter
- Lack of knowledge by staff about needs of people with disabilities, i.e., different types of disabilities and the different needs
- Denial of accommodations
- Sensitivity of marshals: “Marshal spoke only to personal assistant, and not me. I felt unwelcome”
- Communication needs are challenging to get met
- Cultural competence of staff
- No understanding of behaviors often associated with disabilities, i.e. “agitation” of someone with TBI
- Employees not understanding people with disabilities
- Stress can cause agitated reaction by some consumers
- ABI consumers in need of advocates at court
- Train staff to assist people with disabilities in emergencies or evacuations
- Jury duty: “Once they know I have a speech problem, they disqualify because of my speech”

IMPACTS

- Deprives people of the right to participate
- Frustration
- Impairs self-esteem
- Fatigue—emotional
- Fatigue—physical from lip reading
- Unfairly penalizes people for tardiness that’s beyond control
- Negative outcomes on cases
- Barriers to Branch employment: transportation
- Frustration
- Safety can be compromised
- Lack of accountability
- Lack of redress for grievances
- Message not conveyed
- Rights can be compromised if interpretation isn’t accurate
- Delays occur because of lack of certified legal interpreters

SUGGESTIONS

- non-disabled presenters.
- The Branch should employ a centralized ADA coordinator
- Have appropriate/adequate numbers of ADA staff, such as coordinators
- Use people with and without disabilities as trainers, to provide perspective from personal experience
- Each courthouse needs an ADA coordinator who can act as a liaison
- Improve signage—it should be more specific as to distances between elevators and courtrooms or entrances and courtrooms
- More handicap parking
- Post ADA and non-discrimination policies
- Have a focus group of interpreters to get their perspective on what the Branch needs

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Need a Process for Accommodations to meet the needs of consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some consumers do not remember dates • Flexibility in scheduling when interpreters are needed • No one wants to take responsibility: Passing the buck is common • People may not be able to be in court between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. because of personal issues • Transportation: Time limited in many areas—Dial-A-Ride, ADA Paratransport, etc. • No provisions for people with chemical sensitivity if person wants to serve on jury • Need resources to help with completing forms • Provide forms in various ways—through regular mail, via e-mail, online, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal ramifications for poor or missed communication can be severe: FTA, VOP, contempt, etc. • Delays in process • Backs up the judicial process • Inconvenience for individual, for court, etc. • Continuity and familiarity with cases because of rotating judges • Court doesn't recognize needs of person with disability as an employer, specifically as someone who employs a PCA 	
Need to change policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No definition of a parent with a disability in statutes • Parents with disabilities discriminated against in Family Courts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination against disabled person • Rights of minors compromised when disabled parents or guardians are not accommodated or understood 	

- Training recommendations were fulfilled under the Suggestions section.