Library **Accessibility:**
What Public Library Trustees Need to Know

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Why?

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES consist of the nation's largest minority group, as well as the only group that any of us can become a member of at any time

Not every disability is visible.

THE ELDERLY are the largest population living with a disability

1 IN 4 PEOPLE 65-69 years of age have a severe disability

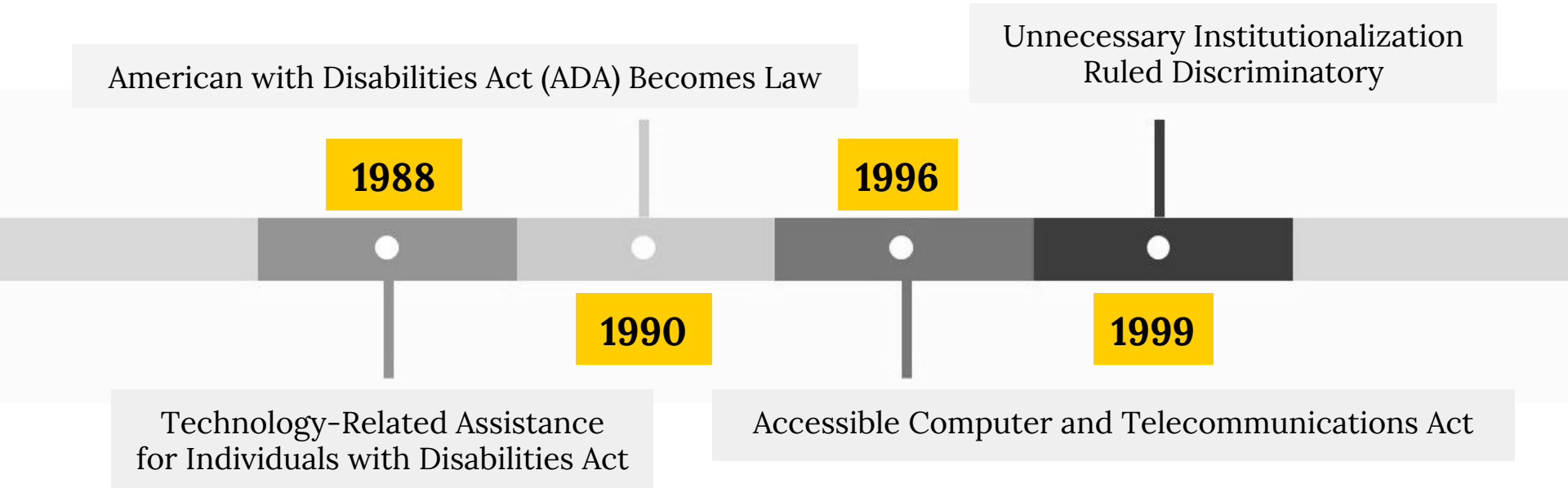# Terms to Know

ADA → Accessibility → Universal Design

ADA

Americans with Disabilities Act

legislation prohibiting discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, and public and private places that are open to the public

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Recent Disability History

American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Becomes Law

Unnecessary Institutionalization Ruled Discriminatory

1988

1996

1990

1999

Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act

Accessible Computer and Telecommunications Act

Source:
http://www.ncld-youth.info/Downloads/disability_history_timeline.pdf

Accessibility

process of ensuring **barrier-free** access to products, devices, services, or information to individuals with disabilities
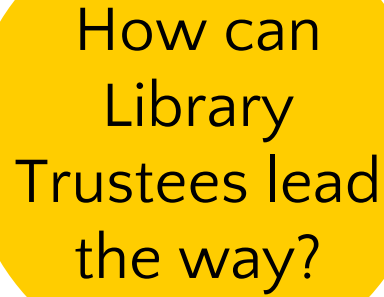
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Universal Design

design of products and environments to be <mark>usable by all</mark> people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design

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How can Library Trustees lead the way?

Advocating for Accessibility

1 Culture & Community

1 — **Culture & Community**

Review your organization's Mission, Vision, and Values Statements.

Connect with disabled patrons using the Library and get to know their library experience.

Talk to patrons with disabilities and other disability organizations in your community.

Advocate for community concerns about inclusion and accessibility at Library Board meetings and with residents.

2 — Board-Approved Policies

2 **Board-Approved Policies**

Review and update out-of-date policies, including:

- ◉ Patron Code of Conduct Policy
- ◉ Unattended Child Policy and Vulnerable Adults Policies
- ◉ Meeting Rooms Policy
- ◉ Service Animals Policy
- ◉ Hiring and Employment Policies

Research other libraries' Accessibility Policies.

Review your Library's Strategic Plan to ensure accessibility is included.

Ensure your Library has effective legal representation and its insurance policy is up to date.

3 Library Spaces

3   **Library Spaces**

Collaborate with your Library Director to develop an ADA or Accessibility Plan to review and address indoor and outdoor features.

Address accessibility and universal design when interviewing architecture and design firms.

Consult your municipality and inquire about local accessibility efforts or a community-wide accessibility plan.

Consider consulting services specializing in accessibility to provide assessment of library furniture, signage, and spaces.

4 Customer Service

4 **Customer Service**

Work with your Library Director to ensure suggestions and inquiries related to accessibility are given swift responses and effective follow-up.

Work with your Library Director to develop a procedure to request accommodations, like ASL Interpretation or hearing assistive devices.

Form advisory groups, focus groups or work with library staff to launch an online community-wide surveys in partnership with local disability groups to gather feedback.

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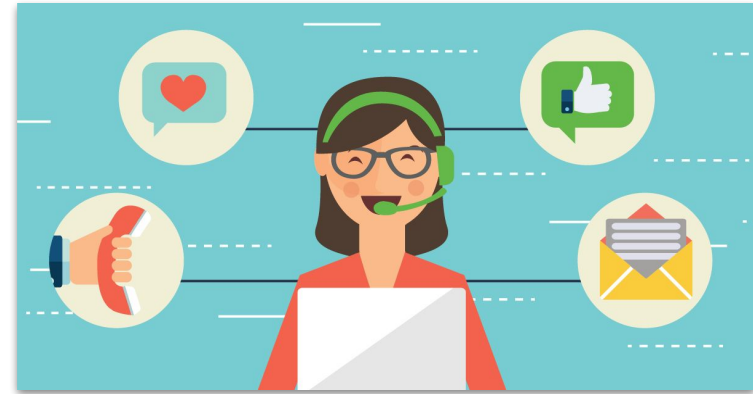
5 Technology

5 Technology

Work with your Library Director to ensure your Library website is compliant with WCAG 2.1 (Web Compliance Accessibility Guidelines).

Work with your Library Director to ensure assistive technologies are available and promoted, including magnifiers, large print keyboards, and assisted listening systems.

Ask questions and ensure accessibility features are available when the organization is adopting new digital platforms and software programs.

Advocate for accessibility usability testing on Library website, app platforms, software programs, and social media channels.
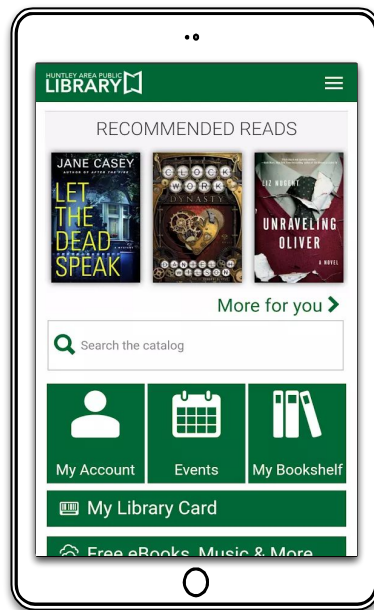
6 Staff Training

6 Staff Training

Work with your Library Director to advocate for

- frequent and regular staff training opportunities for all levels of the organization
- learning opportunities on accessible customer service, inclusive programs and services, accessible social media, and technology
- employee onboarding training that addresses accessibility
- in-person and online training opportunities
- clear and effective procedures for staff requesting accommodations

YOUR MONEY · YOUR VALUES · YOUR PLAN
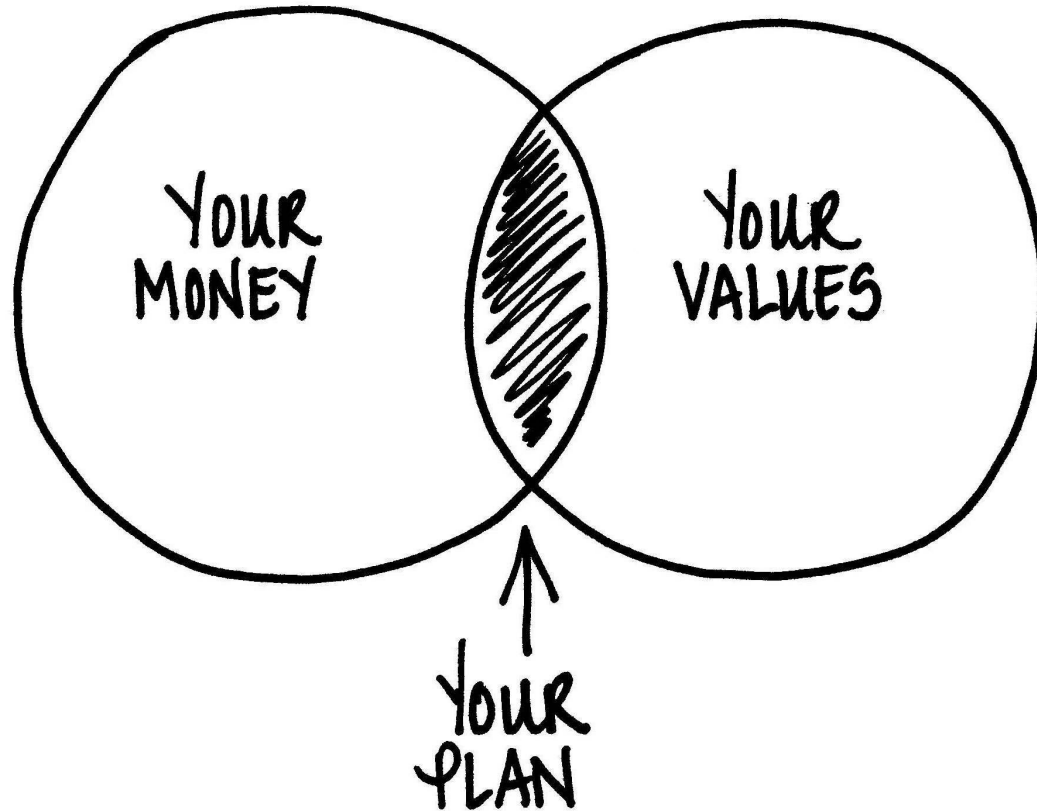
Discussion

📌 **Discussion**

1. When was the last time your organization completed an ADA or Universal Design building assessment and walk-through?

2. Does your organization have a clearly defined process for customers and patrons to request an accommodation for a library program or service?

3. What accessibility concerns have been identified by customers and patrons? How have these been resolved?

4. Do board members appreciate electronic doors at the grocery store and elevators in multistory buildings? How do these features make life easier for them, and how might an accessible library building benefit the community?

5. Are there municipal buildings, meeting rooms, area stores, doctors' offices, post offices, etc. in your community that are accessible? What features make them accessible? How does your library building compare?

📌 Online Resources

ADA and Libraries http://www.ala.org/tools/ada-and-libraries

Americans with Disabilities Act: Title II Technical Assistance https://www.ada.gov/taman2.html

Disability Law Center http://disabilitylawcenter.org/

Library Services to People with Disabilities Policy http://www.ala.org/asgcla/resources/libraryservices

Universal Design Principles http://www.ala.org/asgcla/resources/universaldesign

U.S. Census: Disability https://www.census.gov/topics/health/disability.html

? Questions

Thanks!

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