Know your Rights: Disability Legislation

[Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)](https://adata.org)

Passed in 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all areas of public life to assure that people with disability have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else in every day life. ADA provides for protections in several in areas, under different Titles, which are described below.

Employment (Title I) to access the sample employment opportunities and benefits available to those without disabilities and outlines that employers must provide reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants or employees;

State and local government activities and transportation (Title II) to guarantee that people with disabilities are able to access all programs, activities, services of public entities including transit systems;

Public Accommodations (Title III) assures that entities follow minimum standards for accessibility or make reasonable modifications to serve people with disabilities and includes entities such as privately owned, leased or operated facilities such as restaurants, theaters, retail merchants, hotels, sports stadiums, etc;

Telecommunications (Title IV) requires phone and internet companies provide a nationwide system of interstate and intrastate telecommunications relay services to allow people with hearing and speech disabilities to communicate over the phone & requires closed captioning of public service announcements.

For more information, visit <https://adata.org>

[Fair Housing Act](https://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm#anchor63409)

The Fair Housing Act, as amended in 1988 prohibits discrimination within most housing based

on disability, as well as race, color, religion, national origin, and familial status. The Act requires owners of housing facilities to make reasonable exceptions to their policies and operations to allow people with disabilities equal housing opportunities and also requires landlords to allow tenants with disabilities to make reasonable access-related modifications to their private living space and to common use spaces. However, the landlord is not required to pay for these changes. New multifamily housing with 4+ units be designed/built to allow access for persons with disabilities, which includes doors sufficiently wide for wheelchairs, bathrooms and kitchens allow space for a wheelchair to maneuver, and other adaptable features in the unit.

Help America Vote Act (HAVA)

Congress passed the legislation in 2002 after the 2000 election to reform several aspects of the voting process and to increase voter education and turn out. HAVA’s goals included replacing voting machines, reforming voter registration to facilitate ease for new voters, improving access to voting for people with disabilities, and creating the Election Assistance Commission to guide states to comply with HAVA.

[Rehabilitation Act of 1973](https://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22anchor65610)

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“Rehab Act”) authorized formula grant programs of vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, independent living, and client assistance to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities to prepare for and engage in gainful employment consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and interests. The Act also bans

discrimination on the basis of disability in programs run by federal agencies; programs that receive federal financial assistance; in federal employment; and in the employment practices of federal contractors. The law covering discrimination outlined 4 sections to address: Section 501 affirmative action and non-discrimination in employment by federal agencies of the executive branch; Section 503 affirmative action and non-discrimination in employment by federal contractors and subcontractors with contracts great than $10,000; Section 504 no qualified individuals in the US be excluded from, denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under programs or activities of the executive agency or US postal service; Section 508 requires that electronic information technology be developed, maintained, used, or procured by the federal government be accessible to people with disabilities.

[Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA)](https://www.access-board.gov/law/aba.html)

ABA requires that buildings and facilities designed, constructed, or altered with federal funds or leased by a federal agency comply with federal accessibility standards.

For more detail about these laws, see the following link: <https://beta.ada.gov>