



**Commission for Accessibility
Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 6, 2025**

Meeting Via Zoom

In Attendance: Maureen Culhane, Debbie Prieger, Debra Franceschini, Divya Dorairajan, Tony Phillips, Don Ciota.

5:05 PM CALL TO ORDER

N.B. There one motion made during this session.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: To approve CfA minutes from Sept 8, 2025

Motion by Debbie, Second by Debra
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

COMMISSION BUSINESS

The Commission discussed its intent to request a letter of commendation for a past member. A suggestion was made for the Commission to send letters to elected officials regarding

topics of interest to persons with disabilities. It was agreed commissioners who wished to do so would submit such letters at a Commission meeting for discussion.

Outline: ADA and Disability Law in a Time of Fiscal Uncertainty

I. Introduction

- **Context:** Current economic and fiscal uncertainty (budget constraints, inflation, funding cuts, post-pandemic adjustments).
- **Relevance:** Why disability rights remain critical in hard times.
- **Thesis:** Fiscal challenges do not lessen ADA obligations, but they shape how compliance and innovation occur.

II. Legal Foundations

- **Core Protections of the ADA**
 - Title I: Employment
 - Title II: State and local government services
 - Title III: Public accommodations and commercial facilities
 - **Non-negotiable obligations:** ADA compliance is not optional, even in times of budget strain.
 - **Case law:** Courts consistently reject financial hardship as a reason to deny equal access, except in limited “undue burden” or “readily achievable” standards.
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III. Fiscal Pressures on Implementation

- **Public Sector:** Municipalities and states facing reduced budgets for accessibility improvements.
- **Private Sector:** Small businesses balancing ADA compliance with economic survival.

- **Nonprofits & Schools:** Program cuts, staff shortages, and their effect on service delivery to persons with disabilities.
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IV. Opportunities in Fiscal Constraint

- **Technology & Innovation**
 - Use of AI, telehealth, and virtual participation to increase accessibility at lower cost.
 - **Universal Design as Cost-Saving**
 - Designing for accessibility up front reduces long-term costs.
 - **Collaboration & Partnerships**
 - Community groups, disability advocates, and public-private partnerships as strategies.
 - **Federal & State Incentives**
 - Tax credits and grants available for accessibility improvements.
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V. Risk of Backsliding

- **Program Cuts Disproportionately Impact Persons with Disabilities**
 - Transportation, housing, healthcare, education.
 - **Potential Legal Liability**
 - Noncompliance lawsuits may increase in times of neglect.
 - **Ethical & Reputational Costs**
 - Public perception of businesses and governments that deprioritize accessibility.
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VI. Strategies for Moving Forward

- **Prioritization:** Identifying high-impact, low-cost accessibility measures.
 - **Creative Compliance:** Phased approaches, leveraging digital solutions.
 - **Stakeholder Engagement:** Consulting disability communities in decision-making.
 - **Advocacy:** Protecting and expanding disability rights despite fiscal pressures.
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VII. Conclusion

- **Balancing Act:** Fiscal uncertainty does not erase legal and moral obligations.
- **Future Outlook:** A chance to rethink sustainable, inclusive models of accessibility.
- **Call to Action:** Ensure disability rights remain central, not sidelined, in budget decisions.

ADJOURN: 6:00 PM

Minutes prepared by Don Ciota

2025 Meeting Dates:

Nov 10

Dec 8