



**Commission for Accessibility  
Meeting Minutes  
March 9, 2026  
Via Webinar**

**Webinar online access:**

**5:05 PM CALL TO ORDER**

In Attendance: Debbie Prieger, Debra Francseshini, Divya Dorairrajan, Tony Phillips, Don Ciota.

Link to recorded minutes of this meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/5Bau62Vh7oSWA1U235V5v\\_HFJ0nlh\\_hyxXxPbHYF1AMxc90s-Ab8AmI5yNsGKUi-.1XD2q5qhtngGbutu?startTime=1773090037000](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/5Bau62Vh7oSWA1U235V5v_HFJ0nlh_hyxXxPbHYF1AMxc90s-Ab8AmI5yNsGKUi-.1XD2q5qhtngGbutu?startTime=1773090037000)

Passcode: ynW#@3vG

**N.B. There were two motions made during this session.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: February 12, 2026**

**MOTION 1:** To approve minutes from February 12, 2026.

Motion made by Divya, second by Debbie

**Approved Unanimously.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

NONE.



**Commission for Accessibility**

**Don Ciota, Chairman**

**Disability Rights: What To Know about New  
Laws, Key Court Cases and Self-Advocacy**

Knowing your rights is practical. It changes how you talk to employers, schools, hospitals and government offices. It tells you when to push back, when to document everything and when to file a complaint.

This presentation covers information about your disability rights in 2026. As a person with disability (PWD), discover the new laws and court cases that could impact you next year. More importantly, read on to learn how to advocate for yourself.

## **What Disability Rights You Should Know in 2026**

As 2026 approaches, disability rights are entering a new phase of enforcement and accountability. Several landmark rules finalized in recent years are now reaching their compliance deadlines, pushing organizations to turn plans into real accessibility.

This shift goes beyond legal and regulatory compliance. It entails advancing [disability inclusion for sustainable companies](#) and public institutions that prioritize equal access across digital, workplace and healthcare environments.

But as a PWD, here's what you need to know about disability rights next year:

### **New disability laws**

A bunch of federal rules wrapped up in 2024 and their compliance deadlines hit in 2026. This means organizations have to actually make things accessible now, not just plan for it. The big ones:

- **ADA Title II web and mobile accessibility for public entities:** The Justice Department finally said state and local governments have to make their websites and apps accessible.
- **Section 504 updates for healthcare:** HHS did its first major [Section 504 update](#) in decades. Medical settings require

enhanced protections and any organization receiving HHS funding should have accessible websites and mobile applications.

**Video conferencing accessibility:** The [FCC set rules](#) for making video calls accessible. Think of work meetings, online classes, telehealth appointments providing PWDs accessibility features. Some deadlines stretch into 2026 and we're talking about captions, keyboard navigation, screen reader support and more.

Employment and education are worth watching, too. The ADA still covers workplace rights. Likewise, the [EEOC's guidance on reasonable accommodations](#) matters when you're negotiating schedule changes, remote work, or assistive technology.

Disability rights impact businesses and organizations across all industries, including the legal sector. These go as far as [financial planning for PWDs](#) in BFSI to telehealth services and remote patient monitoring (RPM) in the healthcare sector.

Even the fitness industry is dealing with legal considerations while demanding reasonable accommodations for physically challenged individuals who value fitness and health.

But how about the legal landscape in 2026? This goes way beyond ramps and doorways. Courts are looking at policy changes and technology as fundamental parts of reasonable accommodation.

Digital accessibility is now mandatory. Courts treat websites and apps connected to public services, shopping and education as essential gateways to information.

What else is trending in the courts:

- **Remote-work accommodations:** Post-pandemic, judges are looking more closely at when telework makes sense and what truly constitutes an essential job function. Every case is different and documentation matters.
- **Effective healthcare communication:** With the updated Section 504 rule, more cases test whether hospitals provide interpreters, accessible documents and/or usable patient portals. Winners usually show that the provider did an individualized assessment instead of following blanket policies.
- **Appropriate policy modifications:** Consider universities offering flexible deadlines or rideshare companies revising their verification processes. The courts want to know if organizations genuinely attempted to adapt or merely claimed otherwise.

## Self-advocacy strategies

Knowing your rights is one thing: Using them effectively is another.

In 2026, as accessibility rules gain real traction, self-advocacy will become a crucial skill for navigating work, education, healthcare and even [house-hunting for accessible properties](#). Whether you're requesting accommodations or holding organizations accountable, effective advocacy starts with preparation, persistence and practical know-how.

Nicolas Breedlove, CEO at [PlaygroundEquipment.com\\*](#), fosters inclusivity for PWDs at work. He has his fair share of running advocacy training workshops. And he has taught people with disabilities some practical skills.

Breedlove suggests, "Document everything...Every request, every response, every barrier. Then find your local advocacy groups. You

learn from what worked for other people and there's power in numbers.”

*\*offers fully accessible playground equipment.*

Start here:

- **Government sources:** Access [ADA.gov](https://www.ada.gov), the DOJ Civil Rights Division, the HHS Office for Civil Rights, the EEOC, the FCC Disability Rights Office and [the U.S. Access Board](https://www.access-board.gov) (especially for medical equipment and facility standards).
- **National networks:** Check [National Disability Rights Network](https://www.ndrn.org) (find your state P&A office, [ADA National Network](https://www.ada-national-network.org) and [Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund](https://www.dredf.org)).
- **Rulemaking alerts:** Make a free [Regulations.gov account](https://www.regulations.gov) and set alerts for “ADA,” “Section 504,” or “accessibility.”

## **Exercising Disability Rights in 2026 and beyond**

Rights only matter when you use them. This year, digital doors are supposed to open wider by law...on government sites, in hospitals, on work and learning platforms. Courts care about policies and tech now, not just physical spaces, which matches how we actually live.

Remember the basics: Write down your requests, keep records, know the standards. Likewise, share what works with your community and join local groups, as your voice is stronger with others. Lastly, use the complaint processes when you need them, since they exist for a reason.

### **Commission Planning:**

**Debra**

A discussion occurred about upcoming town events which resulted in the following motion:

## **MOTION 2:**

The Commission will participate in the following events:

Sunday, April 19, 2026 at 2-4:00 PM at Yannity Gym.  
**Second Annual Non-Profit Fair** hosted by the Ridgefield Newcomer's Club with a registration fee of \$30.00.

**Ridgefield Memorial Day Parade**, date t/b/a. (no fee).  
Motion by Divya, Second by Debra.

### **Approved Unanimously**

Debra will arrange for the Commission's registration for both events and see to any details that are required. She will obtain documentation for the Non-Profit Fair registration fee and submit this to the town for payment. She will keep the Commission apprised of any issues that arise.

*Join us for...*

**THE 2<sup>ND</sup>**



## **NONPROFIT FAIR!**

- Host a table
- Share your mission
- Inspire volunteers!

Brought to you by Ridgefield  
Neighbors and Newcomers Club

*Connecting Community*

Minutes prepared by Don Ciota

**6:15 PM ADJOURN**

Minutes by Don Ciota, Chairman

**2026 Meeting Dates:**

**Apr 13**

**May 11**

**Aug ---**

**Oct 19**

**June 8**

**Sept 14**

**Nov 9**

**July ---**

**Dec 7**