

ACCESS TO INCLUSION: Developing Professional Standards for Community Settings



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Background

Public venues are required to meet accessibility standards under the ADA, but families and individuals with disabilities still do not have access to many community settings. True inclusion remains an exception, not the rule. This is due to a lack of systematic and comprehensive professional standards for organizations to follow.

Project Aim

- To transform our Greater Cincinnati area into the most accessible and inclusive region in the country for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
- To serve as a national model for accessibility and inclusion in community settings.



Method

- Literature review of existing guides
- Environmental scan of community settings
- Subject matter consultations
- Meeting with policy partner
- Develop broad standards categories
- Draft initial sub-categories
- Draft individual items

Standards Development

In order to guide the development of professional standards we created four broad categories with subcategories to outline needed accessibility and inclusion criteria.

1. Policy

- Accessibility Statements
- ADA Coordinator
- Grievance Procedures
- Advisory Council
- Staff Training



3. Sensory Accessibility

- Sensory Maps
- Sensory Kits
- Calming Areas
- Sensory-Friendly Events



2. Physical Accessibility

- Parking
- Accessible doors
- Ramps
- Building Layout
- Counter Heights
- Bathrooms



4. Communication

- Accessible and Inclusive Signage
- Audio, Video, Text Alternatives
- Simple Language
- Website Accessibility

Discussion & Future Directions

- Determined the difference between helpful guidelines and comprehensive standards.
- Standards will require a deep dive into all existing laws (ADA).
- A scoring system will need to be developed.
- Standards will need to be reviewed by individuals with disabilities and their families as well as other experts.



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