



The Ability Center

Developing an Access Statement to Promote Community Inclusion

What is Community Inclusion: Inclusion is the act of welcoming and engaging ALL people in ALL community activities. It involves:

- Recognizing and assuring every citizen's right to access.
- Providing inclusive programming with adaptations and accommodations that allow individuals to participate and benefit from services.
- Creating a supportive atmosphere where social acceptance, positive interactions and friendships can develop

What is an Access Statement? An access statement is a written commitment made by an agency or organization stating that all citizens, including persons with disabilities, are welcome. Some local examples are:

Metroparks of the Toledo Area: Metroparks programs and activities encompass a wide variety of interests related to the Park District's nature-oriented purpose and are generally offered free of charge. We welcome all individuals and families from our community to use the Metroparks. Children must be accompanied by an adult at programs unless noted. If you have a disabling condition and would like information and support for accessibility to programs, services and facilities call (419) 407-9700. Park Partner volunteers, or interpreters are available upon request.

The YMCA/JCC of Greater Toledo: The YMCA and JCC of Greater Toledo welcomes all individuals. We invite people with disabilities who need accommodations for programs and facilities to please call your local branch.

City of Bowling Green, OH – Parks and Recreation: The City of Bowling Green welcomes all individuals and families from our community to our programs and facilities, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability. We strive to make our programs, services, and facilities accessible to all individuals. In this regard, the city will make reasonable accommodations to programs and services offered to ensure accessibility to individuals needing such assistance. If you are a person with a disability and would like more information and support for accessibility of programs and services, please give us a call at (419) 354-6223.

Why Does Your Agency Need an Access Statement? The development and acceptance of an access statement demonstrates an understanding that inclusion is important, and everyone is welcome. A written statement publicly commits an agency to making resources and opportunities for participation available to everyone. The access statement also publicizes to citizens/participants that a range of programs will be open for their participation. Persons with disabilities are assured that equal opportunities and support services are available. Residents and agency supporters are made aware that their agency resources will be used to provide access and persons with disabilities will be welcome at programs and facilities.

What Does an Agency Do with an Access Statement? Once a statement is approved it should be distributed to all staff in order to make everyone aware of the agency's commitment to welcome persons with disabilities. The access statement should be placed prominently on one's

website, in all registration brochures, flyers, and other promotional information. The statement should be posted at all agency facilities in order to increase public awareness. In seeking community support for improved access and welcoming of individuals with disabilities, the statement should be shared with all cooperating agencies.

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