

THE GROWTH OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

National Disability Independence Day commemorates the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26, 1990 by President George H.W. Bush.

The ADA is a civil rights law which first broke down barriers that individuals with disabilities face every day. First introduced in the 100th Congress, the ADA bans discrimination based on disabilities in the areas of employment, public accommodation, public services, transportation and telecommunications.



The Act was amended in 2008 (the ADA Amendments Act or ADAAA). The amendment made a number of significant changes to the definition of “disability” under the ADA. It also directed the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to amend its regulations to reflect the changes. The ADA’s protection applies primarily, but not exclusively, to individuals who meet the act’s definition of disability. An individual has a disability if: they have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of his/her major life activities; they have a record of such an impairment; or they are regarded as having such an impairment.

THE ADA IS DIVIDED INTO FIVE TITLES;



Title I: Employment -
Employers must provide reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants or employees to perform essential job functions.



Title II: Public Services -
All transportation facilities constructed must be accessible to, and usable by, persons with disabilities.



Title III: Public Accommodations -
These places include, but are not limited to: private establishments, commercial and non-residential facilities.



Title IV: Telecommunications -
Voice transmission relay services are required by telephone companies and closed captioning is required for federally funded television public service messages.



Title V: Miscellaneous Provisions -
Contains a variety of provisions relating to the ADA as a whole, including its relationship to other laws, state immunity, its impact on insurance providers and benefits, prohibition against retaliation and coercion, illegal use of drugs, and attorney’s fees.



Sources: 1. <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/fact-sheet-eeocs-final-regulations-implementing-adaaa>
2. <https://beta.ada.gov/topics/intro-to-ada/> 3. <https://adata.org/factsheet/ADA-overview>

Photo Sources: Top right: <https://www.adaanniversary.org/resources>
Middle left: <https://www.diabeticvoice.com/2021/07/01/national-disability-independence-day-world-friendship-day/>
Bottom (Titles): <https://www.vgm.com/communities/us-rehab/celebrating-30-years-of-ada/>