

Why make your Restaurant Disability Friendly?

- It is simply good business. 25% of Worcester residents or their family members are persons with disabilities.
- It is the law. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) specifically prohibits restaurants from denying service because of a person's disability.
- The 54 million Americans with a disability have \$220 billion in discretionary income.
- 71% of people with a disability report that they eat out *at least* once a week.
- It is integral to providing excellent customer service. Your job is to make everyone feel welcome and treated with respect.
- It can be done with little to no expense to your business.

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Helpful Tips/Resources for Removal of Physical Barriers:

Some things to consider:

- ◇ Do you have handicap parking nearby or valet parking for patrons with disabilities?
- ◇ Does your restaurant have an accessible entrance?
- ◇ Do you have a restroom that is accessible to persons with disabilities? Is there a sink in the accessible bathroom?
- ◇ Are your aisles and seating areas wide enough to accommodate persons in wheelchairs?

To find out how to improve universal access to your restaurant please refer to one or more of the resources below:

- ◆ New England ADA Center Facility Checklist:
www.adachecklist.org/checklist.html
- ◆ MA Architectural Access Board Regulations:
www.mass.gov/eopss/architectural-access-board.html
- ◆ Federal ADA Standards:
www.ada.gov/2010ADAstandards_index.htm
- ◆ United States Access Board:
www.access-board.gov/

For technical assistance feel free to contact the City of Worcester Office on Disability.



How Can I Make My Restaurant Disability Friendly?



City of Worcester

Human Rights & Disabilities

City Hall Room 303 & 311

455 Main Street

Phone: (508) 799-1152

<http://www.worcesterma.gov/ocm/disabilities>

Se habla español

Here are a few general tips:

- Make sure your staff is aware of your restaurant's accessibility and is trained to respond accurately to inquiries about accessibility.
- Provide sensitivity training for staff who deal directly with patrons. The Worcester Office of Human Rights & Disabilities can provide in-service training to educate staff on how to effectively communicate with a person with a disability and serve them with respect.
- Offer help but never assume it is needed.
- Remember disabilities are not always visible.
- When possible, allow patrons with disabilities to choose their own table. A portion of the bar should be accessible or service should be available at accessible tables within the same area.
- Clear and tactile signage to restrooms should be placed on doors and hallway entrances.
- When talking to a person with a disability, look at and speak directly to that person, rather than through a companion who may be with them.

Tips for patrons who are deaf or hearing impaired:

- Keep note pads and pens available so patrons can read your questions and reply in kind.
- Speak clearly, not loudly. Many persons who are deaf or hard of hearing are able to read lips or just need to differentiate your voice from the ambient noise.

Tips for patrons with a service animal:

- If a service dog is present, don't insist or suggest the patio or outside seating. Service dogs are trained to remain under the table. They are not unhygienic nor is it a violation of the Health Code for them to be in a restaurant.
- If a nearby patron is allergic to dogs, talk to the dog owner, explain the situation and ask if they would accept a different table, so everyone can enjoy their meal. Usually a small concession will be enough.
- Offering water for the dog is a very good idea.

Tips for patrons who are blind or visually impaired:

- Use the 'clock face' method to orient patrons. For example: "Your glass is at eleven o'clock and the salt and pepper is at one o'clock."
- Have a Braille menu available.
- Provide a large-print plain text menu.
- When it's time for the check, keep in mind that the blind patron may be paying. Keep a 'signature card' on hand. This is a small stiff card with a window for a signature. It will help ensure the patron signs in the correct space.
- When returning change, name each denomination separately as you hand it to them.

Tips for patrons with a speech/ language disability:

- Listen attentively when you're talking to a person who has a speech disability.
- Exercise patience rather than attempting to speak for a person with a speech difficulty.
- When necessary ask short questions that require short answers.
- Never pretend to understand if you are having difficulty doing so.

Tips for patrons with physical disabilities:

- If a patron with physical disabilities needs specific cutlery or tableware, they will usually have it with them.
- Patrons will know what their needs are and will ask for help if needed. For example: They may ask that the meat be cut up before serving.
- Provide plenty of room between tables so wheelchair users can navigate to and from their table without disturbing other diners.
- If you have outdoor sidewalk dining please ensure at all times that you have a five foot pathway free of obstructions for patrons as well as passerby to travel safely.