

## 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](http://www.adachecklist.org/checklist.html)
- ◆ MA Architectural Access Board Regulations:  
[www.mass.gov/eopss/architectural-access-board.html](http://www.mass.gov/eopss/architectural-access-board.html)
- ◆ Federal ADA Standards:  
[www.ada.gov/2010ADAstandards\\_index.htm](http://www.ada.gov/2010ADAstandards_index.htm)
- ◆ United States Access Board:  
[www.access-board.gov/](http://www.access-board.gov/)

For technical assistance feel free to contact the City of Worcester Human Rights & Accessibility Office.



## **How Can I Make My Restaurant Disability Friendly?**



**City of Worcester**

**Human Rights & Accessibility  
City Hall Room 101  
455 Main Street**

**[accessibility@worcesterma.gov](mailto:accessibility@worcesterma.gov)**

**Se habla español**

The City of Worcester is committed to principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action.

### **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 Human Rights & Accessibility Office 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 hard of hearing:**

- 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 him/her 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. Always ask the handler first.

### **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.