

REALTOR® BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and New York State law, businesses and facilities that serve the public may not discriminate against individuals with disabilities.

Title III of the ADA prohibits entities – which includes real estate offices – that own, lease, or operate a place of public accommodation from discriminating against a person with a disability. Title III requires equal access and services in the most integrated setting possible, which means that architectural and communication barriers need to be removed in existing facilities where such removal is readily achievable and can be carried out without much difficulty or expense.

Simple steps REALTORS® can take to ensure their office(s) complies with the ADA include:

1. Improve Your Office's Accessibility
 - a. Remove physical barriers that may hinder access and ensure clear pathways within the office, free from obstacles.
 - b. Analyze room setups and ensure accessibility to areas where services are provided to the public, such as meeting rooms.
 - c. Be ready to provide reasonable accommodations, which are changes in any rule, policy, procedure or service needed to provide equal access – including permitting the use of service and emotional support animals.
2. Review Your Website for Accessibility
 - a. Update your site by providing alternative text for images; ensuring proper color contrast; making sure the website is navigable using a keyboard; and providing captions for multimedia content.
 - b. Consider conducting an accessibility audit or consulting with a web accessibility professional to ensure compliance with the Web

- Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1), which include a set of technical standards and specifications to ensure accessibility.
- c. Post an accessibility statement on your website.
3. Increase Training and Awareness
- a. Train your staff on ADA requirements and disability etiquette to ensure they understand how to provide proper assistance and accommodate individuals with disabilities.
 - b. Promote a culture of inclusivity and respect within your office to foster an accessible environment.
 - c. Establish a procedure for individuals to report any ADA-related concerns or complaints. Investigate and address these concerns promptly.

Understanding and assuring compliance with the ADA requirements can be complex, so you may want to consult with an attorney or ADA specialist who can provide specific guidance tailored to your office's situation. Learn more [here](#) from the National Association of REALTORS®.