

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
ACCESSIBILITY POLICY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Purpose:** To comply with the requirements of title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and to affirm Missoula County's policy and practice that facilities, programs, services, and activities of Missoula County government are accessible to members of the public, including qualified individuals with disabilities.

**Definitions:** "Qualified individual with a disability means an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by a public entity (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 42 U.S.C. Section 12131 et seq., 28 CFR Part 35, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990)."

**Policy:** In accordance with title II of the ADA and its implementing regulations, no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of such a disability, be subjected to discrimination or be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of the services, programs, activities or physical facilities which Missoula County provides to the public.

**Employment:** The County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all regulations promulgated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**Effective Communication:** The County will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in the County's programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments. Primary consideration will be given to the requests of the qualified individual with a disability unless another equally effective accommodation is available, or the use of the means requested would result in a fundamental alteration of the service, program, or activity or in undue financial or administrative burden.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a County program, service, or activity, should contact the appropriate County office at 406-523-2700 or 406-721-5700,

as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event. Requests for documents in Braille may take up to two weeks to fill.

Complaints that a County program, service, or activity is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to Missoula County's ADA Coordinator at 406-258-4858.

*Modification to Policies and Procedures:* The County will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all County programs, services, and activities. For example, individuals with service animals are welcomed in County offices, even where pets are generally prohibited unless the service animal's presence or behavior creates a fundamental alteration to the program or service being provided or presents a direct threat to safety. In addition, as a matter of policy, not compliance, Missoula County will afford access to individuals, with or without a disability, accompanied by service animals-in-training. Individuals and their accompanying service animals-in-training will be subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law and applicable alike to individuals with disabilities and their service animals.

To the extent possible, Missoula County will ensure that physical facilities are usable by qualified individuals with disabilities. Where physical facilities cannot be made usable, overall program accessibility will be ensured.

Public meetings will be held at accessible locations and in such a manner that qualified people with disabilities are able to participate fully.

Qualified people with disabilities shall not be discriminated against in participation on boards, commissions, or on advisory and planning committees.

All Missoula County offices and programs shall be accessible to users of TTYs either by having a TTY to provide direct TTY access or by using the Montana Relay Service.

Missoula County's grievance procedure (Appendix A) provides an avenue for prompt and equitable resolution of grievances alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the County's provision of programs, services, and activities, and access to physical facilities.

The County is not required to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

The County will not place a surcharge on a particular individual with a disability or any group of individuals with disabilities to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids/services or reasonable modifications of policy.