

Draft Minutes
Advisory Board on the Americans with Disabilities Act

10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

Teleconference, Via Teams and Broadcast on YouTube

Members present: The Hon. Judge Elizabeth A. Bozzuto, Chief Court Administrator, Chair, Mr. Mark Ciccio, Ms. Kathleen Gensheimer, Ms. Kristin Gantonio, Ms. Laura Jovino, Ms. Sandra Lugo-Gines, Atty. Deirdre McPadden, Mr. Son Nguyen, Atty. Lee Ross..

Others present: Deputy Chief Court Administrator Judge Anna M. Ficeto, Atty. Viviana Livesay, Atty. Lori Petruzzelli, Atty. Stephen N. Ment, Atty. Richard Loffredo, Mr. Matthew Cunningham, Ms. Heather Collins, Mr. Christopher Pritchard.

I. Welcome: Board Chair, Chief Court Administrator Judge Elizabeth A. Bozzuto welcomed the members and the meeting began at 10 a.m.

II. Approval of the Draft Minutes of the March 2024 Meeting: Ms. Lugo-Gines made a motion to approve the Draft Minutes of the March 19, 2024 Minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Jovino, and unanimously approved by the members.

III. Discussion and Approval of the Draft 2024 Report of the ADA Advisory Board: Judge Bozzuto asked various representatives to brief the other members of the 2024 CY activities:

- Ms. Lugo Gines of Superior Court Operations provided an overview of training last year, which saw the completion of The Nuts & Bolts of the ADA by 3,854 Branch staff including 648 Judicial Marshals, while another 257 interns in the Branch's Experiential Learning Program completed this training. The Nuts and Bolts is a mandatory training for all new hires within six months of employment, and every Branch employee must take an annual refresher. Additional classes offered by Court Operations include an online Service Animals 101 training, completed by 293 staff; as well as an *Overview of Disability Rights Law*, and the *Fair Housing Act, Section 504 and the ADA*, which are both offered courtesy of the New England ADA Center; *ADA Speaker Series: Interacting with Respect is Everyone's Job*; and *Perspectives and Possibilities*. The Judicial Marshal Services Academy also offers ADA-specific training, including *Hearing Voices That Are Distressing*, and *Prisoners with Special Needs*. Managers in the Centralized ADA Office presented a program to Judges at the Civil Division's fall program, and all newly appointed Judges and Family Support Magistrates received comprehensive pre-bench training on Title II of the Act with a focus on concepts of reasonable accommodation. Ms. Lugo Gines also noted that beginning in 2025, the Branch requires all employees to complete 10 hours of training with a minimum of two hours focused on diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.

- Mr. Ciccio reported that the Court Support Services Division saw 1, 455 staff completions in *Fair Housing; Overview of Disability Rights Law; Service Animals, the Speaker Series, Nuts & Bolts*, and *Perspectives & Possibilities*. The Division is committed to continuing its wide variety of training to ensure access to justice for all people, including those with disabilities.
- Speaking for the Administrative Division's Facilities Unit, the Director, Ms. Jovino, told the Board about a number of improvements to accessibility to Branch facilities across the state, including: a cellblock restroom at the GA in Bridgeport; approved signage including Braille and the installation of signage at proper heights; the ongoing elevator modernization program which includes updated Braille signage and audio annunciators; the Branch's creation of its first digital courtroom which includes an ADA-accessible podium for attorneys that is wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair and features an adjustable shelf, as well as gallery floor space with spots for wheelchair users and adjacent companion seating. Director Jovino told the Board that in 2025, improvements to signage and elevators will continue, and a project at the family courthouse at 90 Washington Street in Hartford will include adding handicapped parking spaces on the street and making curb cuts to allow better access. A four-elevator modernization project is expected to get underway at 101 Lafayette St. in Hartford in the Spring, and design is underway to modernize two public elevators at the Danbury JD with bids expected to go out in the summer. Director Jovino noted that the Branch's two Facilities architects completed an assessment of all facilities – an expansive project – and found that 29 courthouses were built prior to the 1991 enactment of the ADA.
- Ms. Giantonio told the Board about the efforts of the Information Technology Division over the last year to address a new federal rule regarding Web Content Accessibility compliance for all Branch web and mobile applications. A subcommittee of the Branch's internal Web Board was formed with project leads from ITD and key stakeholders across the Branch. The committee is in the process of finalizing a survey for each Division's application leads/program managers to capture how many public-facing applications will be impacted. Those apps that are identified as part of Title II of the ADA will be the first priority. She also reported that the Commission on Legal Publications (COLP) is currently working with a contracted software engineer to remove the Connecticut Practice Book (and all other COLP publications) to a more updated system. Templates are being created that utilize ADA-compliant tagging and as they are created, COLP uses a particular software to test for compliance. This project has been a cooperative effort and once the initial compliant Practice Book is created, the new editions, produced annually, will be easy to maintain as ADA tagging will be built within the documents.

V. Next Meeting: Support Staff will circulate a variety of dates for the next annual meeting in the Spring of 2026.