

Americans with Disabilities Act:

Starting the Conversation
with a Business

A Leader's Guide

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Priceless



A GUIDE that customers with disabilities can use to give a business feedback about their accessibility.

Acknowledgements:

This GUIDE is a product of the NC ADA Network, a project of the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities in collaboration with the Southeast ADA Center.



Special Thanks to the following contributors:

- Karen Hamilton - writer
- Rene Cummins - writer
- Ellen Perry - editor
- Mercedes Restucha-Klem (Disability Rights NC) - reviewer
- Woodward Communications - graphic design
- Christian Rivera - graphic design
- Alliance of Disabilities Advocates - Survey Team
- Power of the Dream - Self Advocacy Group

DISCLAIMER: The contents of this publication were developed under a grant from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant number 90DP0019-01-00). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this publication do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. The information, materials, and/or technical assistance provided by the Southeast ADA Center are intended solely as informal guidance, and are neither a determination of your legal rights or responsibilities under the ADA, nor binding on any agency with enforcement responsibility under the ADA. The Southeast ADA Center does not warrant the accuracy of any information contained herein. Furthermore, in order to effectively provide technical assistance to all individuals and entities covered by the ADA, NIDILRR requires the Southeast ADA Center to assure confidentiality of communications between those covered and the Center. Any links to non-Southeast ADA Center information are provided as a courtesy, and are neither intended to, nor do they constitute, an endorsement of the linked materials. You should be aware that NIDILRR is not responsible for enforcement of the ADA. For more information or assistance, contact the Southeast ADA Center via its website at www.adasoutheast.org or call 1-800-949-4232 or 404-541-9001.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Starting the Conversation with a Business

What is the purpose of this GUIDE?

Using this GUIDE, a team of people with disabilities can offer a business:

- Specific information on the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- Feedback on making their business more accessible; and
- Follow-up to track changes and improvements.

Do I need to be an expert on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to use this GUIDE?

NO! You do not need all the answers.

You will learn:

- How to find answers to your questions about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); and
- How to share this information with businesses.

How does it work?

- Acting as secret shoppers, a team of people with disabilities will visit a business and take part in 1 or 2 planned activities. During the visit, team members will gather information about the accessibility of that business's programs and services.
- Your team will use this information to start a conversation with that business and guide them to resources on the ADA. This is just to start a conversation. It is not to do an ADA assessment.
- As a result, the business gets some information they need to make their programs and services more accessible to people with disabilities.

This Leader's Guide is a step-by-step guide for using the "ADA: Starting the Conversation with a Business" GUIDE.

Here are the steps:

- **Step 1:** Form a Team.
- **Step 2:** Make your Team Plan.
- **Step 3:** Conduct your Survey.
- **Step 4:** Gather your results and decide how to use them. This is to start a conversation. It is not to do an ADA assessment.
- **Step 5:** Contact the Southeast ADA Center and get specific Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) information to list in your report.
- **Step 6:** Share your results.
- **Step 7:** Follow up with the business.



Step 1:

Form a team

To use the “ADA: Starting the Conversation with a Business” GUIDE you will need to recruit a team of people to assist you.

Size of team:

- A Team of 4 to 6 people is best for groups using this GUIDE for the first time.
- Team members will be visiting a business and collecting information on accessibility at that specific business. A small team is easier to manage.



Who should be on the Team?

It is best to recruit team members with different types of disabilities. However, recruiting a team of people with all the same type of disability works too.

People that you may want to recruit for your team include:

- A person who has a mobility limitation.
- A person who is deaf or hard of hearing.
- A person who has low vision or blindness.
- A person who has an intellectual or learning disability.
- A person who has a mental health disability.
- A person who is interested and has another type of disability.
- A person who does not have a disability. (Including a person without a disability on your team will offer you a different point of view when you survey a business.)

Team Member Responsibilities:

- Participate in a “Getting Started” Meeting to learn how to use the “Starting the Conversation with Business” GUIDE and develop a TEAM PLAN. (1 to 2 hours)
- Use the TEAM PLAN to visit a business as a secret shopper, try to complete 1 or 2 tasks while visiting that business, and collect information for the TEAM SURVEY. (1 to 3 hours)
- Participate in a follow-up meeting to discuss the results of the TEAM SURVEY, prioritize accessibility issues and plan next steps. (1 to 2 hours)
- *Optional:* Participate in follow-up activities such as helping to gather information for the team report, sharing results with the business, or re-visiting the business to find out if they made any changes.

Team Member Qualifications:

- Be willing to work as a part of a TEAM.
- Be willing to learn, ask questions and find answers to ADA questions. (**DO NOT** need to be an ADA expert.)
- Be willing and available to go to a business as a secret shopper and collect information about barriers or accommodations that they find when visiting that business.
- While participating in this project, team members **agree NOT to threaten businesses** that may have accessibility issues.

STEP 1 Materials Needed	___ Handout 1
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Step 2:

Make Your Team Plan

Conduct the first meeting with your team and make your team plan.

Goals of Team Meeting 1:

- Team will select a place of business that they want to visit.
- Team will select 1 or 2 activities that they will do while visiting that place of business.
- Team will review and prepare their survey.
- Team will decide when they will visit the place of business.



Sample Agenda for Meeting 1

1. Welcome and Introductions.
2. Review the purpose of the “*ADA: Starting the Conversation with Business*” GUIDE and the steps involved in using the GUIDE (**Handout 1: About the GUIDE**).
3. Review **Handout 2: Americans with Disabilities Act**.
4. Discuss the role of a team member and ask each member to complete **Handout 3: Our Team**.
5. Work with team to complete **Handout 4: Team Plan**.
6. Review **Handout 5: My Survey** and ask each team member to complete the 1st three questions on this form to prepare for doing their survey.
7. Set the time, date & location for the team’s follow-up meeting to discuss the results of their surveys.

Tips for Team Members:

- Your team is only gathering some information about the accessibility of programs and services at the specific place of business your team decides to visit.
- Team members are secret shoppers and are taking a snapshot of their experience the day he or she visited this business.
- When conducting your survey, team members are NOT doing an assessment of how well this business is complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Team members are only collecting information on barriers that they experience when participating in activities at this business.
- The Survey Handout will give team members a way to note how accessible this business was for them on the day he or she visited and participated in 1 or 2 planned activities.

Tips on being a Secret Shopper:

- Take your survey with you, but you do not fill it out where people can see you.
- You may want to use a camera or use a recorder to take notes.
- NOTE: Some businesses may not allow people to take pictures.



STEP 2 Materials Needed	___ Handout 1	___ Handout 4
	___ Handout 2	___ Handout 5
	___ Handout 3	

Step 3: Conduct Your Survey

- Individual team members go to the business and do the one or two planned activities that the Team agreed on.
- Team members gather information for their survey.

What you will need for your visit:

- Handout 5: My Survey. Each Team member's survey should list the name of the business he or she is visiting and the planned activities the Team members planned to do at that business.
- Tools to record notes: pen and paper, camera, recorder, etc.

Note: Your survey is for your notes

- The Survey Handout gives each team member a way to note how accessible this business is for them on the day they visited and participated in 1 or 2 planned activities.
- The Team will discuss each survey question as a group during Team Meeting 2.

Tips for Team Members:

- Do NOT go into the business as a group. You are secret shoppers. Stagger when people go into the business. It works well for team members to enter the business in pairs or one at a time. Do whatever works best for each individual team member.



- Your team is only gathering some information about the accessibility of programs and services at the specific place of business your team is visiting. You are collecting information to start the conversation with a business.
- Team members are secret shoppers and are taking a snapshot of their experience the day they each visit this business.
- When conducting your survey, team members are NOT doing an assessment of how well this business is complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act. They are only collecting information on barriers that team members experienced when they participated in activities at this business.

Tips on being a Secret Shopper:

- Take your survey with you, but you do not fill it out where people can see you.
- You may want to use a camera or use a recorder to take notes.
- NOTE: Some businesses may not allow people to take pictures.



STEP 3 Materials Needed	___ Handout 5
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Step 4:

Gather Results (Team Meeting 2)

Conduct the 2nd Team Meeting and gather information to report back to the business.

Goals of Team Meeting 2

- Team members will to bring their survey notes, pictures, etc. to this meeting to share with group.
- Each team member will discuss results for each survey question.



Sample Agenda for Team Meeting 2

1. Welcome.
2. Ask for volunteer to take notes.
3. Discuss the results of each survey question for **Handout 5: My Survey**. Go around the room and let each Team member respond to each survey question.
4. Using **Handout 6: Information for Your Report to Business**:
 - As a team, select 1 or 2 problems or barriers at the business that the team wants to share with the business (to start the conversation);
 - Discuss possible solutions to the 1 or 2 major problems or barriers found at the business; and
 - Identify some accessible features or good things that make the business's programs and services more accessible to people with disabilities.

5. Decide who will contact the Southeast ADA Center to get Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) information that addresses the 1 or 2 problems or barriers. This individual can use **Handout 7: Contact Southeast ADA Center**.
6. Decide who will complete the REPORT TO BUSINESS. For example, refer to **Template 1: SAMPLE Report to Business**.
7. Decide how the team will share the report with the business.
Examples:
 - Meet with the manager or owner and share report.
 - Mail or email the report to business and then follow-up with a phone call.
8. Ask volunteers to re-visit the business during the next 3 months to find out if changes were made to improve accessibility for people with disabilities.

<p>STEP 4</p> <p>Materials Needed</p>	<p>___ Handout 5 (<i>Blank Copy</i>)</p> <p>___ Handout 6 ___ Handout 7</p> <p>___ Template 1: Report to Business</p>
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Step 5:

Find ADA Information

Find specific Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) information or publications that address the barriers your team found. List this information in your TEAM Report.

Once you have met with your team and gathered your results, you will want to find Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) information that addresses the specific barriers your team found at the business you visited. It is very important to get the most **CURRENT** and **ACCURATE** information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

To make sure that you have the most current and accurate ADA information, you should:

- Find specific ADA information in writing from federally approved ADA publications; and
- Contact an ADA expert to double-check your findings.



Assign one or two team members to contact the Southeast ADA Center to find the most current and accurate information on the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Handout 7: Contact Southeast ADA Center

provides a script team members can use to complete this step.

The Southeast ADA Center is expecting your team to contact them and they are ready to help!

The Southeast ADA Center is your Regional Resource Center on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). They are one of ten regional centers in the ADA National Network.



Phone: 1-800-949-4232 or 404-541-9001

Email: adasoutheast@syr.edu

Web: www.adasoutheast.org

The Southeast ADA Center is a leader in providing information, training, and guidance on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and disability access tailored to the needs of business, government, and individuals at local, state, and regional levels.

STEP 5 Materials Needed	___ Handout 7
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Step 6:

Write a Report and Share your Results

With your team, write a report of your findings and share your report with the business.

Use **Template 1: SAMPLE Report to Business** to write up the REPORT that your team will share with the business your team visited.

Your report should include:

- Name of your group and contact information;
- Business you visited;
- Time and date of the visit;
- The activity or activities that team members did when visiting this business;
- Disabilities represented on your team;
- Accessible Features that were helpful at this business;
- Top 1 to 2 barriers or problems that team members found at this business;
- Americans with Disabilities Act information (including the web-links) related to the barriers or problems found at this business;
- Contact information for the Southeast ADA Center; and
- Contact information for other local resources that may be of help to this business (i.e., Centers for Independent Living, and other disability organizations in your community.)

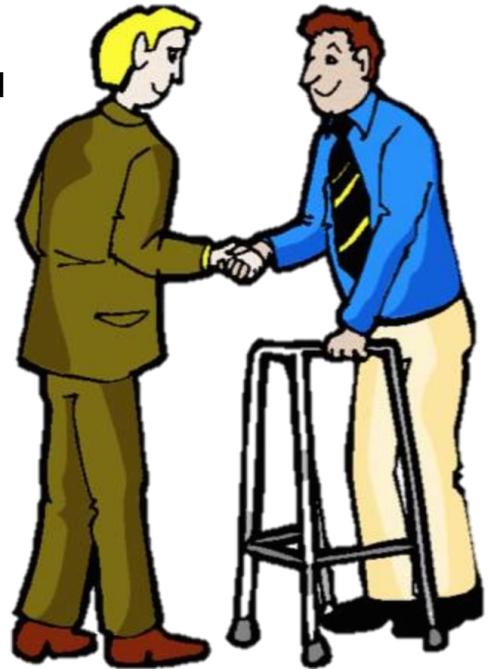
Remember:

- You are starting the conversation with this business.
- Keep your report to 1 to 2 pages.

Share your REPORT

Examples of ways your team may want to share your REPORT with the business you visited:

- Meet with the manager or owner of the business and share the REPORT in person;
- Mail or email the REPORT to the business and then follow up with a phone call; or
- Other ways that your team suggests.



STEP 6 Materials Needed

**Template 1:
Sample Report to Business**

Step 7:

Follow up with the Business

Visit the business again to find out what changes they made.

Follow up with the business your team visited to find out what happened as a result of your efforts.

- Did the business make their services more accessible to people with disabilities as a result of your REPORT?
- What did the business change or improve to make their services more accessible to people with disabilities?
- Are people with disabilities reporting that the business made improvements?

Share the Good News.

Let your community know that this business is making changes to better serve people with disabilities. Example of ways to share this news include:

- Write articles for newsletters;
- Get news coverage in the newspaper or on local television;
- Post a comment on the business's Facebook Page; and
- Be creative by getting the whole team involved in spreading the good news.

Contact the Southeast ADA Center to report your results. They want to let others know about your good work.



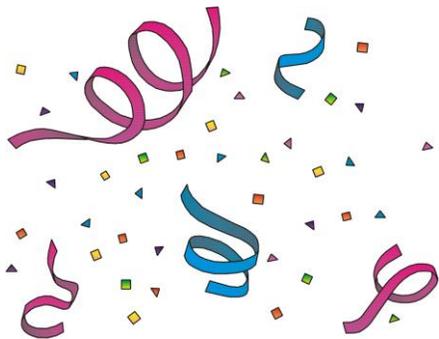
Phone: 1-800-949-4232 or 404-541-9001

Email: adasoutheast@syr.edu

This is just the beginning.

Continue the conversation with the business.

- Ask the business if they need more information, training or technical assistance to make more improvements.
- If needed, refer the business back to the Southeast ADA Center for additional technical assistance.
- If needed, refer the business to a local resource such as a Center for Independent Living, or Protection and Advocacy Organization.



Congratulations!

Celebrate your Success.

STEP 7 Materials Needed	___ Report to Business
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Handouts

- Handout 1: About This Guide
- Handout 2: Information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Handout 3: Our Team
- Handout 4: Our Plan
- Handout 5: My Survey
- Handout 6: Information for Report to Business
- Handout 7: Contact Southeast ADA Center to Get Accurate ADA Information

Templates

- Template 1: SAMPLE Report to Business

NOTES

Handout 1: About this Guide

Americans with Disabilities Act: Starting the Conversation with a Business

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- Follow-up to track changes and improvements.

Do I need to be an expert on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to use this GUIDE?

NO! You do not need all the answers.

You will learn:

- How to find answers to your questions about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); and
- How to share this information with businesses.

How does it work?

- Acting as secret shoppers, a team of people with disabilities will visit a business and take part in 1 or 2 planned activities. During the visit, team members will gather information about the accessibility of that business's programs and services.
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Handout 2: Information about the ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

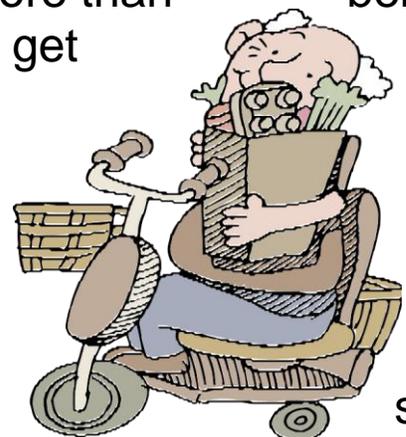
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities, such as buying an item at the store, going to the library, enjoying a meal at a local restaurant, or even taking the city bus.

- More than 50 million Americans – 18% of our population – have disabilities, and each is a potential customer.
- People with disabilities and their families want to go to businesses that welcome customers with disabilities.
- Approximately 71.5 million baby boomers will be over age 65 by the year 2030 and will be demanding products, services, and environments that meet their age-related physical needs.

How does a business make its programs and services accessible?

Accessible programs and services involve more than being able to find an accessible parking space and get into the building.

- Once a person with a disability goes inside, can they fully participate in the programs and services offered by that business?
- Does the business take steps to make a person with a disability can take advantage of the same programs and services as everyone else?



Accessible Programs and Services involve:

Effective Communication: Is all written or spoken information as clear and understandable to people with disabilities as it is for people who do not have disabilities?

Policies, Procedures and Practices: Does the business have policies, procedures or practices that might discriminate against people with disabilities?

- Policies are general and overarching rules and guidelines, including eligibility criteria, employment guidelines, admission and ticketing rules, and fee structures.
- Procedures are the planned actions by which policies are implemented.
- Practices are the routine ways in which policies and procedures are carried out on a day-to-day basis.

Facility Accessibility: Can a person with a disability physically get into the facility and to what you want to do?

Maintenance of Accessible Features: Are accessible features usable and in good repair?

For answers about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) contact:



Your Regional Resource Center on the Americans with Disabilities Act

Phone: 1-800-949-4232 or 404-541-9001

Email: adasoutheast@syr.edu

Web: www.adasoutheast.org

Handout 3: Our Team

When we follow up with a business after our survey, we will share the following information about our team:

- Number of people on our team.
- Disabilities represented by the people on our team.
- Any specifics about your disability or other information that you want to share. (refer to examples listed below)
- We will not share your name.

Please complete the information listed below.

We want to let the business we survey know about who is on our team.

Your Name: _____

As a member of our team, what disability do you want to represent?

I am a Team Member who (check one or more):

_____ has a mobility limitation

_____ is deaf or hard of hearing

_____ has low vision or blindness

_____ has an intellectual or learning disability

_____ has a mental health disability

_____ has another type of disability not listed above

_____ does not have a disability

If you like, tell us more about your disability.

Examples:

- I have a mobility limitation and I use a cane.
- I am hard of hearing and use assistive listening devices when they are available.

What else do you want a business to know about you as a customer? (use the space below to write your answer)

Handout 4: Team Plan

(Complete this worksheet as a group)

What place of business does your team want to visit?

Information about the place you want to go:

Name of Business: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Email address: _____

Website: _____

Other information (optional): _____

What activities do team members plan to do when you get there? List 1 or 2 activities that you want to do at this business.
Refer to the examples.

When do team members want to visit this place of business to complete their surveys?

Tips for Planning Your Visit

- Remember, you are secret shoppers. Avoid going into the place of business as a group. Instead, team members should go in to the business a few at a time. You may want to go into the business in teams of 2 if you like.
- It is OK for team members to visit the business at different times or even different days, but it is best to visit within the same week.



Examples of Places of Business and Activities:

Go to Library

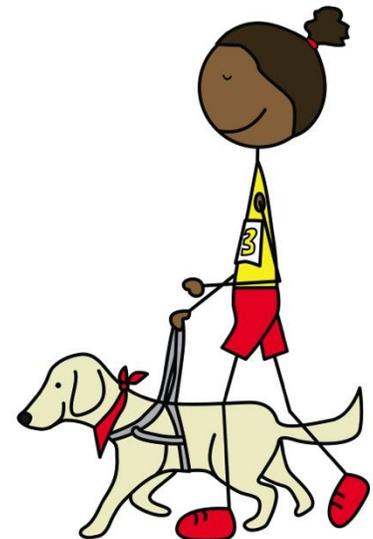
1. Use the library computer to find a book that you want to read and go find the book.

Go to a theater

1. Purchase a ticket at the box office and ask for any accommodations that you may need.

Go to City Hall

1. Find the office that provides information about City Council meetings and ask for the City Council meetings schedule.



Go to a City Park or Recreation Center

1. Register for a class or event at the local recreation center and ask for any accommodations that you may need.

Handout 5: My Survey

Your name: _____

Business you are visiting: _____

List the 1 or 2 activities that your team plans to do when you visit this business:

1. What accommodations were available when you visited this place of business? What things helped you?

2. Were there any accommodations that you needed that were NOT there? yes no *(If you said yes, please list accommodations you needed.)*

3. Did you get any assistance from people who work at this business to help you complete your team activities?
 Yes No *(If you said yes, tell about the assistance you got.)*
 - A. How did you go about getting assistance from the people who worked at this business?

 - B. Did the assistance from people who worked at this business meet your needs?

4. How did you talk with the people who worked there during this visit? (For example: spoken words, written notes, augmentative communication device, etc. We will share this with the business.)

5. Were you able to complete the activities that your team planned to do? ___ yes ___ no (If you said no, what task were you NOT able to do and why?)

6. At this place of business, what accessible features were helpful to you? (Examples: large print flyers, signs with large letters and pictures, etc.)

7. At this place of business, what problems or barriers did you find?

8. If you found problems or barriers, what could the business do to make the problem or barrier go away?

9. What are some good things that this business is doing to make their programs or services accessible to people with disabilities?

10. Is there anything else that you want to report?

Handout 6: Information for Your Report to Business

Refer to “Template 1: SAMPLE Report to Business” for examples.

Name of your group:

Contact Person for your group: (name, phone, email)

Visit to: (name of business and address)

Date & Time/s of Visit:

Our Activity: (What activities did team members do at this business?)

Our Team that visited your business represented people with the following disabilities:

Accessible features at your business that were helpful to us:

Barriers for people with disabilities that we found at your business (List up to 4, with possible solutions if you can think of any):

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) publications that may be helpful to you (Use “Handout 7 – Contact Southeast ADA Center to Get Accurate ADA Information” to find Americans with Disabilities Act publications and web links that relate to the barriers you listed above):

For more information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and removing barriers for customers with disabilities at your business, contact your Regional Resource Center on the ADA:

Southeast ADA Center

Phone: 1-800-949-4232 or 404-541-9001

Email: adasoutheast@syr.edu

Web: www.adasoutheast.org

Handout 7: Contact Southeast ADA Center to Get Accurate ADA Information

Find ADA publications and web links that address the specific Barriers that you found at the Business your team visited.

1. Review the top barriers & possible solutions that you listed on “Handout 6 – Information for Your Report to Business”
2. **Contact the Southeast ADA Center**
Phone: 1-800-949-4232 or 404-541-9001
Email: adasoutheast@syr.edu
Web: www.adasoutheast.org

NOTE: At some point during your conversation, with the Southeast ADA Center, the operator may take your contact information and tell you that an “ADA Information Specialist” will call you back within 24 hours.

3. Share the following information with Southeast ADA Center:
 - **Hello. My name is _____ and I am working on a “Starting the Conversation with a Business” project. I have some questions about the barriers our team found at a business we visited.**
 - **Our team visited (*name & type of business*).**
(*Examples: East Bend Library; Joes Restaurant; Barneys clothing store.*)

- **The top barriers & possible solutions that our team identified at this business were:**
(Refer to barriers and possible solutions that you listed above.)

- **Are these barriers and possible solutions covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act? If so, what ADA information and publications would you recommend we share with this business?**

4. List the ADA publications or information you found:

5. Include the ADA publications and information that you found on your “Report to Business.”

Template 1: SAMPLE Report to Business

Name of our group:

Oakdale Advocates

Contact: Jane Billings – 333-333-3333, J.Billings@gmail.com

Visit to: Bill's Restaurant * 100 South Street * Carrboro, NC 27510

Date: 6/2/2015 (5:45 p.m.)

Our Activity: Go into Bill's Restaurant, order a meal at the counter, find a table and enjoy meal.

Our Team that visited your business represented:

- 1 person with physical disabilities using power wheelchair.
- 1 person with low vision.
- 2 persons with an intellectual/learning disability (autism and other).
- 1 person without a disability.

Accessible features at your business that were helpful to us:

- Staff was willing and friendly when I asked for help (good customer service).
- Staff helped me get my tea when I asked and staff brought my special order to our table.
- Drink machine dispenser was accessible to me from my wheelchair.
- Space between tables is tight in some areas, but there was an accessible (at least 36" wide) path of travel to our table and other places I needed to go inside Bill's Restaurant.

Some barriers for people with disabilities that we found at your business:

- Because I have low vision, a friend had to read the menu to me. (Possible solution: a large print menu would help me order independently.)
- Door to enter Women's restroom was heavy to open. (Possible solution: adjust tension on door.)

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) publications that may be helpful to you:

- "ADA GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESS"
(<http://www.ada.gov/smbusgd.pdf>)
- "ADA UPDATE: A PRIMER FOR SMALL BUSINESS"
(<http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/smallbusiness/smallbusprimer2010.htm>)

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