

COUNTY OF UNION, NEW JERSEY

Access and Inclusion Solutions Process

Introduction

The County of Union (County) intends that programs, services, parks, and facilities will be accessible to and inclusive of people with disabilities. Towards that end, the County makes reasonable modifications to enable and support participation by persons with disabilities in County programs, services, parks, and facilities.

Bureau of ADA Compliance

Title II 35.107 requires the appointment of a “responsible person” to coordinate ADA compliance for entities with 50 or more employees. The County employs more than 50 persons, and it has named Manuel Ramirez as the County ADA Compliance Bureau Chief. He can be reached at 908-527-4432 or mramirez@ucnj.org.

Solution Process Requirements

The County recognizes that people with disabilities may have specific preferences and priorities, and we invite discussions about same. The Solutions Process described below invites discussion and encourages solutions.

1. A person with a disability should, in writing, describe how, when (day and time), and where inadequate access to a County park, program, policy, or facility occurred.
2. The Access and Inclusion Request for Solution (RFS) is preferred. However, an oral request for solution made by phone or in a face-to-face conversation, will be considered as received.
3. The County commits to allow alternative means of filing an RFS.
4. The County commits to a prompt and effective solution.
5. The County agrees that a solution that is not acceptable to the submitter may be appealed to the Deputy County Manager or their designee.
6. The County will maintain records related to a RFS for a length of time that satisfies New Jersey public records retention requirements.
7. This Solutions Process is applicable to all County programs, services, parks, and facilities. This Solution Process is also posted in all County facilities open to the public, as well as in County facilities that are used only by employees.

8. The Solution Process is available in alternative formats for persons with disabilities. Contact mramirez@ucnj.org.

Solution Process Steps

This Access and Inclusion Solutions Process is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"). It may be used by anyone who believes that a County program, service, park, or facility is not available to them because of their disability. The Solutions Process does not apply to human resources issues, such as the relationship between the County and its employees. The County personnel policies govern those issues.

Step 1: Complete the Access and Inclusion Request for Solution Form

The Request for Solution should be in writing and contain information about issue requiring a solution. The information includes the name, address, email, and phone number of the person seeking a solution, and location, date, and a brief description of the issue requiring a solution.

The County will accept, upon request by a person with a disability, alternative means of requesting a solution, such as conducting personal interviews or accepting a tape or voice file of the request.

The Request for Solution should be submitted by the person with a disability and their designee as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the date on which the issue arose or occurred.

The Request for Solution should be submitted to:

Manuel Ramirez
Bureau of ADA Compliance
Department of Economic Development
10 Elizabethtown Plaza
Elizabeth, NJ 07207
Work Phone: 908-527-4432 Cell Phone: 908-472-3526 Fax: 908-527-4901
Email: mramirez@ucnj.org

Step 2: Schedule a Meeting

Within 3 calendar days after receipt of the request for solution, the ADA Compliance Bureau Chief or designee will schedule a meeting, in-person or virtually, with the person seeking a solution to discuss the request for solution and the possible solutions.

The schedule communications may occur by phone, by text, in person, or by email. The meeting shall occur within 10 calendar days after receipt of the request for solution.

Step 3: Meeting to Discuss the Request for Solution

Within 10 calendar days after receipt of the request for solution, the ADA Compliance Bureau Chief or designee will meet with the person seeking a solution to discuss the request for solution and the possible solutions.

The person requesting a solution may bring other persons to the meeting, such as a family member, friend, coworker, advocate, or attorney, but shall provide notice to the ADA Compliance Bureau Chief or designee regarding the number of persons to attend and their relationship to the person seeking a solution.

Step 4: Provide a Solution

Within 10 calendar days of the meeting, the ADA Compliance Bureau Chief or designee will provide a written decision regarding the request for solution, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the person seeking the solution, such as large print, Braille, or audio tape.

The response will explain the position of the County and offer a solution to the request for solution. There may be times where more than one solution will be effective, and if so, the written response will describe the possible solutions.

Step 5: Appealing a Request for Solution Decision

If the response by the ADA Compliance Bureau Chief or designee does not satisfy the person seeking a solution, they or their designee may appeal the decision to the Deputy County Manager or designee within 5 calendar days after receipt of the response. An appeal made later than 5 calendar days after the receipt of the response will not be considered.

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the Deputy County Manager or designee will meet with the appellant to discuss the appeal and the original decision regarding the request for solution.

Within 15 calendar days after the meeting, the Deputy County Manager or designee will respond in writing, and, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the appellant, with a final resolution of the appeal.

Process Costs

The County will absorb the costs of staff time and consultants that become involved in this process. The person requesting a solution or appealing a request for solution decision will absorb all costs incurred by them in the process.

Implementation Costs

Depending on the solution, some, none, or all of the costs of implementing the solution may be absorbed by the County. The County understands and abides by the Title II 35.130(f) prohibition on the making of surcharges to persons with disabilities for the cost of reasonable modifications.

Records

All Requests for Solutions received by the ADA Compliance Bureau Chief or designee, appeals to the Deputy County Manager, and responses from these two offices will be retained by the County for at least a length of time that satisfies New Jersey public records retention requirements, but not less than three years.

Other Solutions May Be Sought

The County believes an internal solution is an effective approach to accessibility and inclusion issues, offering more flexibility to all persons and to the County. That said, other solutions may be sought. A person with a disability may seek a solution through the US Department of Interior Office of Civil Rights, the US Department of Justice, or proceed directly to Federal District Court.

Information

The County of Union is committed to access and inclusion and believes that both make the Cities of the County of Union better communities. To discuss access and inclusion initiatives, reach the ADA Compliance Bureau Chief at mramirez@ucnj.org.



Access & Inclusion Request for Solutions

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____

Email: _____

Inadequate access to: (Please mark "X" that apply)

County Park: _____ Program: _____ Policy: _____ Facility: _____

Please specify the day, time, and location of the occurrence:

Please provide a description of the occurrence:

Please state what you think should be done to resolve the occurrence:

Please attach additional pages as needed.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please return to: Manuel Ramirez, Bureau Chief of ADA Compliance, 2nd Fl.

10 Elizabethtown Plaza, Elizabeth, NJ 07207

Upon request, reasonable accommodation will be provided to assist in completing this form.

Either contact the County ADA Compliance Bureau Chief at 908-527-4432, email at mr Ramirez@ucnj.org, or schedule an in-person meeting.