

Jackson County, Tennessee Americans with Disabilities Act Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a comprehensive Federal civil rights statute enacted in 1990. Comprised of five major parts, or “titles”, the ADA’s stated purpose was to provide a “clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities”. It is estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau that over 50 million U.S. residents have a disability, and over 50% of senior citizens age 65 or older have a disability. Title II requires that all public entities with 50 or more employees perform a self-evaluation, prepare a transition plan, make the transition plan available for three years, publish a notice of non-discrimination, designate an ADA Coordinator, and develop a formal complaint form and grievance procedure.

Jackson County has made several efforts over the years to improve accessibility, including the completion of this Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (SETP). Jackson County has completed a self-evaluation of all county facilities, programs, and procedures and prepared a Transition Plan that outlines the necessary steps to be fully compliant with the requirements of Title II of the ADA. The county will strive to ensure that all residents and visitors are able to access all services, programs, and activities, and will promptly investigate any formal grievance filed according to the grievance procedures outlined. Additionally, the county will strive to include annual budgetary allotments to make required improvements that will eventually make the various facilities fully accessible, with emphasis given to the improvements that most impact the ability of persons with disabilities to access facilities or programs. Where access cannot be attained, an alternate means to offer the same opportunities to persons with disabilities will be provided. In performing this self-evaluation, areas open to the public and employee common-use areas were assessed at the following county facilities identified by Jackson County as having programs/services provided:

County Facilities (Owned, Leased, or Hosting Programs)

- Jackson County Courthouse
- Jackson County Jail
- Charles Ralph Holland Memorial Library
- Health Department
- Jackson County Memorial Building
- UCHRA
- Fairview Senior Center
- Granville Senior Center
- Jackson County Archives
- Center Grove Comm. Center
- Dodson Branch Comm. Center
- Fairgrounds Comm. Building

Areas of these facilities evaluated generally included parking lots, walks, and areas within buildings that are not restricted to employees, such as restrooms, meeting spaces, reception areas, and hallways. Some buildings or areas of certain buildings have infrequent public access and were evaluated under the

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same guidelines. Typical employee common-use areas evaluated included break rooms, employee restrooms, locker rooms, conference rooms, etc. Spaces dedicated as employee work areas are exempt from the self-evaluation process, but that does not obviate the need of the county to ensure full accessibility is provided to employees with disabilities, consistent with the requirements of Title I of the ADA.

In addition to county facilities, the self-evaluation reviewed existing county policies and procedures within each department. Key items reviewed within each department included ADA-specific training of employees, past interaction and accommodation of persons with disabilities, review of publications produced by each department, and staff suggestions to help them accommodate persons with disabilities. Following this review, recommendations were made to improve accessibility of programs for each department. It is the goal of Jackson County to make facilities for all services, programs, and activities fully accessible within 10 years, though this will be largely dependent on a number of economic factors and future changes to the ADA Standards for Accessible Design (ADASAD) or other unforeseen requirements that would necessitate additional improvements to county facilities. The county has committed to provide training for staff on the requirements of the ADA and make accommodations for employees with disabilities, many of which can be done without costly architectural renovations. The Transition Plan will be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure the county is fully compliant with ADASAD standards. The results of the self-evaluation identified a number of architectural barriers at county facilities. The estimated cost to correct these deficiencies is over \$500,000. The degree to which these barriers limited accessibility and their priority for corrective action was subjectively categorized as “high”, “medium”, or “low”. “High” priority included barriers that effectively prohibited access to a service or program or present a safety hazard. “Medium” priority included barriers that either partially prohibited access or made it quite difficult. “Low” priority barriers typically do not limit access but are not compliant with standards. The improvements will be categorized into a 10-year phasing program to spread out the cost for implementation out and address the most serious deficiencies at the most used county facilities. The actual implementation schedule, budgeting, and prioritization is up to the administration and is likely to be impacted by complaints, new regulations and requirements, and availability of funding. Note that these costs are to resolve accessibility issues by making architectural improvements and in many instances, there are procedural or other modifications that can be made to provide equal access to county programs and some modifications are not required until renovations are completed. These modifications are noted within this report.

1. Introduction and Overview

1.1 Introduction

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), enacted on July 26, 1990, is a Federal civil rights statute, under the jurisdiction of the United States Department of Justice (DOJ), which provides civil rights protection to qualified individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, public accommodations, state and local government services, transportation, and telecommunications. The law states its purpose is “to provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities”. Similar protections are provided by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADA was signed into law by President George Bush on July 26, 1990, extending civil rights protections to individuals with physical or mental disabilities in the

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following areas: 1. Title I – Employment (all Title II employers and employers with 15 or more employees)

2. Title II – Public Services (state and local government, including public school districts and public transportation)

3. Title III – Public Accommodations and Services operated by Private Entities

4. Title IV – Telecommunications

5. Title V – Miscellaneous

Jackson County is located in NE Middle Tennessee (Figure 1) with a population of approximately 11,560 (2016 estimate) and contains a total land area of 308.3 square miles. It is classified as a “public entity” pursuant to Title II of the ADA. The county is also required to comply with Title I, which requires state and local government entities to practice nondiscrimination in all parts of the employment process.

1.2 Purpose

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is the codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the executive departments and agencies of the Federal government. It is divided into 50 titles that represent broad areas subject to Federal regulation. Each volume of the CFR is updated once each calendar year and is issued on a quarterly basis.

Relative to the ADA on July 26, 1990, the DOJ issued rules implementing Title II, which is codified at 28 CFR Part 35, which applies to Jackson County. Title II requires state and local governments to make their programs and services accessible to persons with disabilities. This requirement extends not only to physical access at government facilities, programs, and events, but also to policy changes that state and local governmental entities must make to ensure that all people with disabilities can take part in, and benefit from, the programs and services of state and local governments.

The ADA regulations [ref. U.S. DOJ, 28 CFR Part 35, Subpart A, 35.105 and 35.150(a) and (d)] require state and local governments to conduct a self-evaluation of their programs and services to identify barriers to access. One of the fundamental reasons for performing the self-evaluation is to identify potential problems before they occur, so that discrimination complaints won’t be necessary. By identifying the policies, programs, services, and activities that do not comply, the county can take action to remove those barriers to ensure that the county is not discriminating against individuals with disabilities. Title II of the ADA stipulates that Jackson County is required to perform six administrative responsibilities:

1. Publicize the name and contact information of the designated ADA Coordinator responsible to oversee compliance.
2. Administer and write a self-evaluation of the programmatic barriers in services offered by the local government and provide an opportunity to interested persons, including individuals with disabilities or organizations representing individuals with disabilities, to participate in the self-evaluation process by submitting comments.
3. Publicize and inform applicants, participants, and beneficiaries of the county’s policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of disability related to county services, programs, and activities.

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4. Establish a complaint/grievance procedure to respond to complaints of noncompliance from the public.

5. Develop a transition plan if structural changes are necessary for achieving program accessibility.

6. Retain the self-evaluation and provide it for public inspection for three years.

The county is committed to complying with the tenets of Title II of the ADA of 1990, and other Federal and state statutes and regulations intended to make county-owned and operated facilities, programs, services, and activities accessible to persons with disabilities. This ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (SETP) establishes a new benchmark for compliance with ADA and identifies a plan to remove barriers.

1.3 Transition Plan Overview

Jackson County became aware of the need to be in full compliance with the requirements of the ADA by the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) to remain eligible for federal funding. The County developed a work plan to assess county-owned and operated facilities, programs, policies, services, and activities for compliance with ADA.

This work plan included:

- Facility audit (interior and exterior spaces)
- Self-evaluation of county programs, services and activities
- Facilitate designating an ADA Coordinator
- Develop grievance procedures
- Prioritize facilities improvements for accessibility
- Develop written transition plan
- Adoption of the transition plan

Facility audits were performed only in those areas open to the public for this project, along with employee common-use areas. Other areas within county-owned facilities that are not accessible to the public must also be accessible for employees with disabilities as a requirement of Title I.

Accessibility in employee work areas will be assessed on a case-by-case basis based on the needs of the individual and nature of their disability. The county is committed to ensuring that all workspaces are accessible pursuant to the requirements of each job and making the necessary modifications when needed. In addition, the various facilities utilized by the county as polling places were evaluated. The evaluation of polling places was limited only to those areas used by voters, including parking, accessible routes, facility entrance, circulation area to the polling area, and the polling area. Other portions of these polling facilities, unless owned by Jackson County, were not evaluated.

County pedestrian facilities within the public county right-of-way (ROW) were noted by the county as being either non-existent or under a maintenance agreement with incorporated areas. The county is largely rural outside of Gainesboro, the county seat. A public involvement process was incorporated to assist in the development of this SETP and provide an opportunity for obtaining input. These recommendations are intended to serve as the transition plan and framework for implementation. All the recommendations in this plan for structural or programmatic solutions to facilitate the opportunity of access to all individuals are subject to review, revision, and approval of the County Commission and appropriation of funding to implement the improvements. This transition plan is an on-going, dynamic document that will need periodic review and updating. In particular, additional evaluations will be required when updates are made to the ADA or supporting statutes or when existing accessibility guidelines change or new guidelines are established. In its efforts to maintain

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compliance, the county has several mechanisms in place to provide for an ongoing update of the transition plan:

- Designated ADA Coordinator is empowered with oversight responsibility for implementation of the requirements of the ADA.
- Implementation activities will be part of the county's annual Capital Improvement Plan.

1.4 Legislative Background & Framework

For more than 40 years, Jackson County has been subject to many of the non-discrimination provisions contained in the ADA. Significant precursory legislation to the ADA includes the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (RA). Congress' first significant effort to address discrimination on the basis of disability was its enactment of the ABA, which provided that all buildings constructed, altered, leased, or financed by the U.S. Government shall be accessible to, and usable by, individuals with physical disabilities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act states: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of his disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive Agency". It also requires Federal agencies to provide accessible programs and facilities. The ADA was modeled after Section 504. The ADA applies to state and local government entities, public accommodations, public transportation, and commercial establishments. The key points of understanding for ADA are:

- The ADA is fundamentally civil rights legislation. This legislation protects the rights of people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodation, and access to services offered to the public.
- The ADA addresses facility access and access to programs and services. Buildings are required to be accessible and the activities that are offered inside and outside those buildings also must be accessible.
- Outdoor recreation standards as they relate to ADA for a variety of facilities were included in the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design (ADASAD). Standards for amusement rides, boating and fishing facilities, exercise machines and equipment, golf and miniature golf facilities, play areas, and swimming/wading pools and spas went into effect on March 15, 2012 for all new or altered facilities.

The primary focus of this report is to assess the compliance of Jackson County facilities, programs, policies, services, and activities related to Title II of the ADA. Title II of the ADA was effective on January 26, 1992.

Governmental entities must ensure effective communication, including the provision of necessary auxiliary aids and services, so that individuals with disabilities can participate in civic functions. Public entities are not required to take actions that would result in undue financial and administrative burdens. However, they are required to make reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures where necessary to avoid discrimination, unless they can demonstrate that doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity being provided.

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One important way to ensure that Title II's requirements are being met in communities of all sizes is through self-evaluation, which is required by the ADA regulations. Self-evaluation enables local governments to pinpoint the facilities, programs, and services that must be modified or relocated to ensure that local governments are complying with Title II requirements of the ADA. A public entity that employs 50 or more employees must retain its self-evaluation for a minimum of three (3) years.

1.5 Facility Access versus Program Access

The ADA addresses two types of accessibility:

- Facility accessibility
- Program accessibility

Facility accessibility requires that a building or structure be physically accessible. Individuals with disabilities cannot be provided access to programs, services, and activities if a building is inaccessible. Program accessibility includes facility accessibility, but also means that a person with a qualified disability receives the same benefits from a program or service and has an equal opportunity to participate as any other participant. The ADA requires all county programs, but not all county buildings, to be accessible. The regulation implementing Title II, 28 CFR Part 35 (as amended September 15, 2010) contain two "safe harbor" provisions. Under the first "safe harbor" provision, elements of existing facilities that already comply with either the 1991 ADA Standards or Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) are not required to comply with the 2010 ADA Standards unless they were altered on or after March 15, 2012. Under the second "safe harbor" provision elements comprising a path of travel to an altered primary function area are not required to comply with the 2010 ADA Standard merely as the result of an alteration to a primary function area, provided those elements comply with the 1991 ADA Standard or UFAS.

There is some flexibility with regard to program accessibility. Not every building (or each part of every building) needs to be accessible. Structural modifications are required only when there is no alternative available for providing program access.

The county is required to provide program access, which means that programs, services, and activities when viewed in their entirety, are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. When choosing a method of providing program access, the county will give priority to the one that results in the most integrated setting appropriate to encourage interaction among all users, including individuals with disabilities. In accordance with Title II program accessibility requirements, the county is required to:

- Provide equal access to programs, services, and activities as provided to other members of the community.
- Provide programs, services and activities in an integrated setting, unless separate or different measures are necessary to ensure equal opportunity.
- Absorb any costs necessary to ensure nondiscriminatory treatment, such as making modifications required to provide program accessibility or providing qualified interpreters.
- Allow a person with a disability to participate in a program, service or activity regardless of disability.

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- Eliminate unnecessary eligibility standards or rules that deny individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to enjoy programs, services or activities unless necessary for the provisions of the program, service or activity.
- Modify policies, practices, or procedures that deny equal access to individuals with disabilities.
- Furnish auxiliary aids and services when necessary to ensure effective communication.
- Provide appropriate signage and structural communication to inform and alert individuals with visual, mobility, and hearing disabilities.
- Eliminate physical barriers to programs, services, and activities by remodeling existing facilities, constructing new facilities, or moving programs, services or activities to an accessible location.
- Ensure that newly constructed or altered buildings and facilities are free of physical and communication barriers that restrict accessibility of people with disabilities.

1.6 Undue Burden

The county does not have to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a program or activity, would create a hazardous condition for other people, or would represent an undue financial and administrative burden. A fundamental alteration is a change to such a degree that the original program, service, or activity is no longer the same. For example, assume that a community sponsors college-level classes that may be used toward a college degree. To be eligible to enroll, an individual must have either a high school diploma or a General Educational Development certificate ("G.E.D"). If someone lacks a diploma or G.E.D. because of a cognitive disability, it is unlikely that the community would have to alter the requirement to provide equal access. Modifying the rule would change the class from college level to something less than college level and would fundamentally alter the original nature of the class.

The determination that an undue financial burden would result must be based on an evaluation of all resources available for use in a program. For example, if a barrier removal action is judged unduly burdensome, the county must consider other options for providing access that would ensure that individuals with disabilities receive the benefits and services of the program or activity.

1.7 ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan Requirements

The purpose of this ADA SETP is to document the county's review of access to facilities, programs, services, and activities by individuals with disabilities in order to determine if there are any discriminatory or potentially discriminatory practices, policies, or procedures.

In accordance with the Title II requirements for self-evaluation, Jackson County:

- 1) Identified all the public entity's programs, activities, and services. [28 CFR 35.105(a)]
- 2) Reviewed all the policies and practices that govern the administration of the county's programs, activities, and services.

If structural changes are identified to provide program accessibility as part of the self-evaluation, the ADA identifies specific elements to be included in the transition plan. At a minimum, the elements of the transition plan are:

- 1) A list of the physical barriers in the county's facilities that limit the accessibility of its programs, activities, or services to individuals with disabilities.

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- 2) A detailed outline of the methods to be utilized to remove these barriers and make the facilities accessible.
- 3) The schedule for taking the necessary steps to achieve compliance with Title II of the ADA. If the time period for achieving compliance is longer than one year, the plan should identify the interim steps that will be taken during each year of the transition period.
- 4) The name of the official responsible for the plan's implementation.

1.8 Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan Process

A work plan and method to assess county-owned and operated facilities, programs, policies, services, and activities for compliance with the ADA was implemented to complete the ADA SETP. This work plan included:

- Facility audits (interior and exterior)
- Self-evaluation of county programs, services, and activities
- Public outreach to advocacy groups
- Facilitate designating an ADA Coordinator
- Develop grievance procedures
- Identify required/suggested training for county staff
- Prioritize facilities improvements for accessibility
- Develop transition plan
- Public involvement
- Adoption

Recommendations are intended to serve as the transition plan and framework for implementation. All the recommendations in this plan for structural or programmatic solutions to facilitate the opportunity of access to all individuals are subject to review, revision, and approval of the Commission.

1.9 Facility Audit

In 2019, audits of building and facility interiors and exterior site features were performed. These audits included only in those areas of each facility that are open to the public and employee common-use areas. This review identified physical and architectural barriers and provided recommendations to comply with Federal accessibility requirements.

Photographs of architectural and site conditions at the time of the inspection for all building amenities were taken for the record. The specific site and architectural improvements recommended to remove barriers and improve accessibility are listed in the appendices.

A key function of county government in the State of Tennessee lies with the County Election Commission for conducting all elections. As such, the Administrator of Elections is responsible for reviewing all polling locations to ensure that they meet accessibility requirements, most of which are housed in county facilities. The Election Commission inspected polling places as part of this self-evaluation, which included several county-owned facilities but also numerous facilities not under the control of the county. Facilities not owned by the county that are used as polling places include a large number of schools, and other municipal buildings, which are scattered around the county. Recommendations for future action are included in this Self Evaluation and Transition Plan.

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1.10 County Administration and Departments

There are several distinct departments that provide county services, programs, and activities that are available to the public. The level of interaction of each Department is classified as extensive (high numbers daily), regular (variable but generally low numbers daily to weekly), limited (generally weekly or less), or none. These Departments and descriptions of their functions and types and regularity of interaction with the public are:

- Circuit Court Clerk (101 Hull Ave. Gainesboro) – Provides services to assist citizens dealings with Circuit, General Sessions Criminal, Traffic, General Sessions Civil, Order of Protections, Juvenile, and Jury. They also provide information to the public about the schedule of the various courts and the Local Rules of Court. They have extensive interaction with the public.
- Clerk & Master's Office (101 Hull Ave. Gainesboro) – The Jackson County Clerk and Master is custodian of court records for three courts: Chancery Court, Equity Division of Civil Court and Domestic Relations Division and the Probate Court. This involves the filing and maintenance of various types of lawsuits (i.e., divorce, land disputes, workers' compensation, conservatorships, adoptions/name changes, contract/debt disputes and the administration of probate estates and maintenance of the Chancery Court docket, including the setting of motions, pretrial matters, and docket sounding. In addition, the Jackson County Clerk and Master's office is also responsible for the filing of delinquent tax suits filed by Jackson County, and the City of Gainesboro. This involves the collection of the delinquent taxes and if necessary, the auction of property as a result of nonpayment. They have extensive interaction with the public.
- County Clerk (101 Hull Ave. Gainesboro) – The County Clerk's office has extensive public interaction and is most likely best known for motor vehicle registration and licensing. The office presently handles over 14,000 motor vehicle transactions per year. In addition, the office now prints titles for the State of Tennessee Department of Revenue, expediting the titling process for Jackson County residents. The county clerk serves as clerk of the county legislative body. The clerk is responsible for sending required public notices and keeping the minutes of the county legislative body meetings. In addition, the Clerk's office issues marriage licenses and issues permits to sell beer in unincorporated areas of the county, issues business licenses, maintains records of the notaries public in the county, and is a license agent for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency for boat registration.
- Election Commission (101 Hull Ave. Gainesboro) – It is the mission of the Jackson County Election Commission to ensure the integrity of every vote cast in Jackson County by administering election law and procedures equally and fairly to all, by providing the most efficient, accurate and secure election process possible, and, in all our endeavors, exceeding the expectations of the voters, taxpayers and citizens of Jackson County in accountability and competence. They have extensive interaction with the public.
- Emergency Management (316 N. Murray St.) – Jackson County Emergency Management Service is responsible for assisting the response to emergencies in Jackson County, having extensive interaction during emergencies but otherwise is limited. The agency assists first responders with any assets they have available. When an emergency exceeds local first responders' capabilities, the mayor or the emergency management director at the mayor's request may formally request additional assistance from other jurisdictions, from the state (Tennessee Emergency Management Agency) and from the federal government (Federal Emergency Management Agency). Staff work with law enforcement, fire and rescue agencies for planning. They also assist different departments in writing, requesting, and

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managing grants and they assist first responders in obtaining necessary training. They also work with administrators at Jackson County School system in implementing their different safety initiatives.

- Health Department (620 N. Murray St.) – The mission of the Jackson County Health Department is to protect and promote the health of Jackson County citizens and visitors to Jackson County. The department's main functions include assuring services by promoting the development of services outreach and assistance to services, assessment to determine health status, health resources, and health problems, and policy development which leads to protection and promotion of health. They have extensive interaction with the public.
- Highway Department (430 Baugh Hollow Rd.) – The Jackson County Highway Department is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in Jackson County. They make every effort to maximize the efficient, effective use of resources in the support, maintenance and upkeep of county infrastructure. They are committed to the safety of citizens and providing the highest level of service to the community that budgets allow. They have limited interaction with the public.
- Mayor (101 Hull Ave. Gainesboro) – The Mayor serves as the Chief Financial Officer for the county, in addition to representing the county at many functions and presentations. Other duties include County Commission Chairman, making nominations and appointments of persons to certain committees, and making recommendations to the Jackson County Commission. The Mayor has extensive public interaction.
- Property Assessor (101 Hull Ave. Gainesboro) – The assessor is required by the Tennessee Constitution to list and value all property subject to ad valorem taxation on an assessment roll each year. The "ad valorem" basis for taxation means that all property should be taxed "according to value" which is the definition of ad valorem. The assessed value is a percentage of "fair market value" or "use value" as prescribed by law. The Jackson County Assessor's office must appraise and assess approximately 9,000 parcels of property. All public service properties are assessed by the State Assessed Properties Division (formerly Public Service Commission). Interaction with the public is regular.
- Public Library (205 W. Hull Ave.) – The Jackson County Public Library empowers residents to think, act, and aspire by providing opportunities to connect to the community, participate in life-long learning, and explore the world at large. Library staff have extensive interaction with the public.
- Register of Deeds (101 Hull Ave. Gainesboro) – The Register of Deeds records a variety of documents for the public, including warranty deeds, trust deeds, modifications, easements, etc. Interaction with the public is regular.
- Sheriff (620 Hospital Dr.) – The men and women of the Jackson County Sheriff's Office are committed to the protection of life and property among the citizens of the county, and are committed to providing law enforcement, corrections, and criminal justice services through a partnership with the community that builds trust, reduces crime, creates a safe environment, and enhances the quality of life. They continually seek innovative ways to inspire deputies to continue to uphold their mission. Employees in the Sheriff's Department have extensive public interaction.
- Trustee (101 Hull Ave. Gainesboro) – The Jackson County Trustee manages a professional business office that collects and accounts for almost \$28 million annually in state, federal, and local funds used to operate Jackson County Government. Jackson County Property Tax is one of the primary sources of revenue and is collected annually by the Trustee's Office. The Trustee also manages the investment of temporarily idle funds and supervises the cash flow for Jackson County Government. Public interaction is regular.

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- Veteran Affairs (744 School Dr.) – The Jackson County Veterans Affairs Office provides accredited representation to Veterans and their family members with VA benefits and assistance in filing the necessary forms as required by the Department of Veterans Affairs. They have regular interaction with the public.

2. Public Information

The county is required to notify the public of their rights and protections under the ADA (28 CFR 35.106), which states: “A public entity shall make available to applicants, participants, beneficiaries, and other interested persons information regarding the provisions of this part and its applicability to the services, programs, or activities of the public entity, and make such information available to them in such manner as the head of the entity finds necessary to apprise such persons of the protections against discrimination assured them by the Act and this part.” In addition, notices regarding ADA should be included in a number of other situations to inform the public of their rights and opportunities to ensure accessibility, including signage directing the public to accessible routes and entrances. Self-Evaluation General Findings:

- A poster entitled “Equal Opportunity is the Law”, defining the requirements of Title VII, was observed in most county buildings.
- Grievance procedures for the Americans with Disabilities Act were adopted by the County Commission. See Appendix D.
- Public meeting agendas for the County Commission and other boards/commissions do not provide any information about the ADA Coordinator or other information about requesting accommodations.
- Non-discrimination notice is not used on all printed materials.
- Signage is absent at all the larger facilities for directing visitors to the accessible entrances where multiple entrances are present and not all are accessible. The International Symbol of Accessibility (ISA) is not present or in clear view at all accessible entrances.

Recommended Action:

- Standard language for a Notice of Nondiscrimination needs to be used by all departments for all county publications and printed materials. This statement should include, at a minimum, the following language or equivalent: “Jackson County acknowledges its responsibility to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In order to assist individuals with disabilities who require special services (i.e. sign interpretative services, alternative audio/visual devices, etc.) for participation in or access to county sponsored public programs, services, and/or meetings, the county requests that individuals make requests for these services forty-eight (48) hours ahead of the scheduled program, service and/or meeting. To make arrangements, contact the ADA Coordinator, at (931)-268-9516.”
- Public notification should always identify a contact person for individuals with disabilities who may request program modifications, or information on how a hearing or speech impaired person could communicate by telephone.
- Increase outreach to persons with disabilities by finding additional methods and formats to provide information about meetings and other county activities. The county should endeavor to inform the public of the possible modifications required to make its services, programs, and activities accessible.

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- Include the following notice on all materials printed by the county that are made available to the public: "This publication can be made available in alternative formats, such as Braille, large print, audiotape, or .pdf. Requests can be made by calling (931)-268-9512. Please allow 72 hours for your request to be processed."
- Signage directing visitors to county buildings should be placed along the accessible routes and the International Symbol of Accessibility (ISA) should be placed in clear view at all accessible entrances.

3.1 Designation of ADA Coordinator

The ADA regulations require any public entity with fifty or more employees to designate at least one employee to coordinate ADA compliance (28 CFR 35.107 (a)). Federal regulations require public entities to make available to interested persons the name, office address and telephone number of the ADA Coordinator. The ADA Coordinator's role is to plan, coordinate, organize, facilitate, and promote compliance efforts. The Coordinator responds to requests for accommodations or barrier removal. The Coordinator also receives and investigates complaints and grievances. Self-Evaluation Findings:

- The Jackson County Commission appointed the Clerk and Master Clerk as the ADA Coordinator effective December 21, 1994, by consensus of the County Commissioners at a regular meeting. Ms. Sherrie Pippin Loftis, ADA Coordinator Phone: (931) 268-9516

Recommendations:

- Activities related to ADA compliance should be directed to the Coordinator, and each county department should designate a liaison for ADA issues and publicize the identity of this person.
- Information regarding the identity of the county's ADA Coordinator should continue to be provided to staff, posted at all county facility locations, incorporated into employee handbooks, staff and public phone directories, placed in frequently used publications, and on the county website.
- The designated ADA Coordinator must be familiar with the requirements of ADA and get appropriate training to ensure compliance by the county.
- It is strongly suggested that each department have one individual with knowledge of ADA issues that can respond to issues that arise within their department and assist the ADA Coordinator.

3.2 Grievance/Uniform Complaint Procedures

A public entity that employs 50 or more employees must adopt and publish grievance procedures which provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited by the ADA (28 CFR 35.107 (b)).

Findings:

- Jackson County has a grievance procedure that provides for resolution of complaints (see Appendix D). The procedure indicates that the grievance shall be submitted to the ADA Coordinator but there is no evidence of a grievance form being available. The policy indicates the complaint should be filed in writing and include information about the alleged discrimination (name, address, phone number of complainant and location, date, and description of the problem).
- Complaints can be submitted via alternative means if needed to accommodate a disability.
- The policy states that complaint be submitted as soon as possible but no later than 60 days after the alleged violation.

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- The policy outlines the process with timelines for reviews, responses to the complainant, and the appeal processes.

Recommendations:

- Revisit the grievance procedure and update as needed. Some recommendations include:
 - o Consider development of a standard grievance form to ensure all information needed to review complaints is provided. An example form can be found in Appendix D. Verify that forms are available at all facility locations and consider providing form on the county website, along with the procedure.
- Centralized record keeping of complaints and tracking of complaint resolution will help the county to regularly update its compliance efforts, and plan for additional compliance implementation. The ADA Coordinator should ensure that records are kept of all ADA-related complaints, including informal items brought to their attention.
- The county should review its current administrative policy and be able to provide the recommended ADA Grievance Form in an alternate accessible format, i.e. Braille, audio-tape, e-text, large print, etc. as needed.
- Administrative policies and procedures should continue to be developed, adopted, and implemented to provide consistency for filing complaints or grievances and record-keeping.

3.3 Public Meetings

Public meetings are routinely held by various county departments, boards, and commissions. The ADA prohibits public entities from excluding persons with disabilities from programs, services, or activities offered by a public entity. The law does allow a public entity to use both structural and nonstructural methods to achieve accessibility to programs, services, and activities (28 CFR 35.150 (a)(1); (b)(1)). While most of the meetings are open to the general public and advertised as required by law, the public does not regularly attend several of the meetings of the groups noted.

Self-Evaluation Findings:

- The following boards/commissions meet at various times on county business and would be considered open meetings that can be attended by members of the general public. Other groups may meet, but do not have regular published schedules. Meetings are held in Courtroom of the Jackson County Courthouse unless otherwise noted.
 - o Audit Committee – as-needed
 - o Beer Board – monthly as-needed
 - o Jackson County Board of Commissioners – Every six weeks or sooner if needed.
 - o Board of Equalization – as-needed
 - o Board of Health – as-needed, various venues
 - o Budget Committee – monthly with additional workshops and hearings
 - o Ambulance Committee – as-needed
 - o Law Enforcement Committee – as-needed
 - o Public Building Committee – as-needed
 - o Records Commission – as-needed
 - o Solid Waste Committee – as-needed
- Most county departments have not been requested to provide accommodation at meetings in the past.

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- County public notices and agendas have no statement regarding how requests for accommodations for persons with disabilities can be made in advance. Some notices and program flyers for programs at the library include the statement “Jackson County does not discriminate based on race, color, or national origin in federal or state sponsored programs, pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 USC 2000d).”.
- The request for accommodation statements vary by department.
- Public notices are posted in a variety of places including newspaper advertisements and posted in some county facilities.
- Meetings are advertised in The Jackson County Sentinel. Agendas are posted on the county bulletin boards, Board of Education, and the Post Office.

International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss Recommendations:

- The county should schedule and hold public meetings in the most accessible locations whenever possible. Meetings which the public regularly attends should be made the highest priority.
- An assistive listening system needs to be installed in the Courtroom of the Courthouse. Compliant signage that includes the International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss should be installed where assistive listening devices are available.
- Other rooms used for meetings and utilize audio amplification should also provide assistive listening devices, including the library.
- Standard language on all county publications regarding availability of and requests for accommodations should be provided to departments.
- The county should develop procedures for obtaining and providing auxiliary aids such as sign language interpreters, readers, descriptive services, and other assistive technologies.
- The county should make reasonable modifications to enable individuals with disabilities to attend and participate in all public meetings.
- Provide meeting agendas and minutes in alternative formats when requested.
- The county should assemble and maintain a list of readily accessible meeting spaces to facilitate the scheduling of meetings and/or the relocation of meetings upon request.

3.4 Accommodations to Access Programs, Services, and Activities

The ADA prohibits public entities from excluding persons with disabilities from programs, services, or activities offered by a public entity. A public entity may not adopt policies that are discriminatory or engage in practices that are discriminatory. This prohibition applies to policies that are explicitly exclusionary and to those which appear to be neutral but have discriminatory effect. The law does allow a public entity to use both structural and nonstructural methods to achieve accessibility to programs, services, and activities (28 CFR 35.130 (b)(3); 35.150 (a)(1); (b)(1)).

Self-Evaluation Findings:

- There is no evidence of intentional discriminatory practices, intentional exclusion of individuals with disabilities, or practices to segregate individuals with disabilities or limit access to county programs, services, or activities.
- Public meetings are generally held in locations that are thought to be accessible to persons with mobility impairments and staff had no recollection of any previous complaints of issues.

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- Polling locations were reviewed by the Election Commission in 2016. Survey forms for some locations were reviewed and some polling places were noted as needing temporary accommodations during voting (parking spaces with cones, etc.). It is unknown what tools or equipment was utilized during the evaluation or the qualifications/experience of reviewers.
- The courts have a Request for Modification form available.
- The Health Department has access to TDD and relay services to communicate to persons with hearing loss through the contract with the state.
- The Election Commission provides early voting for the two-week period prior to election day.
- The Jackson County Library has sponsored programs such as Sensory Storytime that are designed specifically for families of children with special needs.
- The Jackson County Library has sponsored programs and provided interpreters for Spanish, and American Sign Language.

Recommended Action:

- Information directing the public how to request accommodations should appear on all public notices, announcements, and agendas.
- Front line staff, such as administrative assistants, receptionists, and staff that has everyday contact with the public, should receive training on interacting and accommodating individuals with disabilities.
- High use facilities, such as the Jackson County Library, that sponsor a variety of programs should ensure that an accommodation request form is available and all publications that provide information about the programs. The statement should provide contact information and deadlines for accommodation requests to participate in the programs.
- Existing polling places should have the necessary temporary facilities or other accommodations provided to ensure access to all voters.
- The ADA Coordinator should continue to monitor programmatic access.

3.5 Special Events and Private Events on County Property

The county could provide opportunities for private organizations to utilize county facilities for special or private events. Contained within the ADA are two titles that pertain to public and private entities. Public entities are not subject to Title III of the ADA. Conversely, private entities are not subject to Title II. In many situations, however, public entities have close relationships with private entities that are covered by Title III (Public Accommodations), with the result that certain activities may be at least indirectly affected by both Titles. This is the case with certain special events or private organizations that may use county facilities.

Self-Evaluation Findings:

- The county is aware of two (2) special private events that occur on county property at this time. Both of which are music events that occur at the Fairgrounds.
- The following special events are sponsored by the county or participated in by various county agencies:
 - o The Jackson County Library sponsors various special events throughout the year, including art exhibits, concerts, children's Storytime, and educational programs. Events are held at the library.

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3.6 Contracted Services and Contractors

Public entities cannot use contract procurement criteria that discriminates against persons with disabilities (28 CFR 35.130 (b)(5)). In addition, selected contractors should be held to the same nondiscrimination rules as the county.

Self-Evaluation Findings:

- No discriminatory or exclusionary practices were evident in the selection of contractors and contracted services.

Recommended Action:

- All county contracts should be reviewed to ensure that they include specific, detailed ADA language to ensure that contractors that provide county services to the public comply with the ADA.
- It is recommended that the county consider means to maintain compliance when contracting for services or when leasing facilities by:
 - o Including ADA compliance requirements in new requests for proposals.
 - o Reviewing ADA requirements when contracts or leases are negotiated, revised, or renewed.

3.7 Customer Service, Satisfaction, and Input

ADA requires a public entity to provide an opportunity to interested persons and organizations to participate in the self-evaluation process. For three years after completion of the self-evaluation, a public entity must maintain a record of any problems identified (28 CFR 35.105).

Self-Evaluation Findings:

- No complaints or grievances were reported related to inability to accommodate customers with disabilities or inability of persons with disabilities to access county programs or facilities.

Recommended Action:

- Partner with persons with disabilities, their caregivers, and advocates for the disabled to identify concerns and gather comments on capital improvement projects to improve accessibility to people with disabilities during design.

3.8 Equally Effective Communication

ADA calls for public entities to provide applicants, participants, members of the public, and companions with disabilities with communication access that is equally effective as that provided to persons without disabilities (28 CFR 35.160(a)-(d)). The regulations also require that the public entity provide the appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to give people with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of a service, program, or activity of a public entity. The law stipulates that the individuals can request the auxiliary aids and services of their choice and that the county will honor the request unless a suitable substitute exists or the request is not required under the law. In addition, the county may provide qualified interpreters via video from a remote location as long as it can meet the performance requirements of 28 CFR 35.160(d).

Auxiliary Aids and Services Self-Evaluation Findings:

- No departments stated that they have hired/utilized transcription services and readers.
- The County Commission room has no Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs) available.
- The courts also have no ALDs available.
- The county does not have any active contracts with interpreters or other service providers to honor requests for accommodation.

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Recommended Action:

- The county should provide staff training and information regarding auxiliary aids and effective communication. Encourage staff to offer alternate means to complete transactions and assistance to complete county forms if possible.
- The county should have a complete list of auxiliary service providers, i.e. Braille transcription services, computer assisted transcript, dictation and transcription, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, etc.

Interpreter Services Self-Evaluation Findings:

- The courts indicated that they have provided interpreters in the past and make every effort to accommodate requests.
- The Jackson County Library has sponsored programs and provided interpreters for Spanish, and American Sign Language.
- No other departments indicated use of or requests for interpreters.

Recommended Action:

- The county should consider a county-wide contract for qualified ASL interpreter services that departments could utilize as needed. At a minimum, a list of qualified individuals should be maintained for all potential services that might be required on short notice. The county could also explore the viability of providing qualified ASL interpreters from a remote location and transmitting the disabled participant's response to the interpreter in accordance with 28 CFR 35.160(d).
- Interpreters should be provided upon request for accommodations or considered in situations where an interpreter is known or likely to be required.

Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf Self-Evaluation Findings:

- The telephone directory on the county's website does not identify numbers capable of use with TDD/TTY, including the ADA Coordinator's number.
- Jackson County is part of the Jackson County 911 District, which provides emergency 911 service. The 911 phone system includes technology compatible with TDD to communicate with citizens who call and have hearing loss.
- The "Accessibility" page on the website includes information about website accessibility and includes the Federal Information Relay Service phone number at 1-800-877-8339 for TTY/Voice communication.
- Some, but not all, of the phone systems in any Jackson County facility are compatible with TDD/TTY systems.

Recommended Action:

- Where 911 is publicized, it should identify the method of communicating with hearing impaired persons.
- The Federal Information Relay Service phone number (1-800-877-8339) for TTY/Voice communication should be published in more locations than just the website "Accessibility" page.
- Where the county uses an automated answering system for receiving and directing incoming telephone calls, the county should enable this system to provide real-time communication with individuals using auxiliary aids and services, including TTY and telecommunications relay systems (28 CFR 35.161(b)).
- The county should consider the purchase of a network PC compatible TDD/TTY system that would allow individual computers to be networked and access TDD/TTY calls, instead of purchasing separate TDD/TTY units that require a dedicated line. The advantages of a networkable system will

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allow the user to transfer calls, conduct conference calls, and utilize voice mail. A less desirable, but effective, means to provide access would be to use one of the many services available (Deaf Link, etc.) to provide two-way communication for persons with hearing disabilities.

- All staff responsible for responding to incoming telephone calls should be trained in the protocol and use of TDD/TTY communications. Information and training should be provided on an ongoing basis.
- The county should develop procedures to ensure that TDD/TTY are maintained in a working and operable condition. Website – note that currently there are no adopted standards for websites that apply to Title II or Title III entities. However, numerous lawsuits have been filed recently, alleging discrimination due to websites not meeting the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which apply to federal websites. Some decisions that make it to federal Appeals Courts may be binding to all similar entities in that court jurisdiction. It is very likely that the WCAG will be the enforceable standard for all websites at some point in the future. It is highly recommended that all Title II and Title III entities work towards modifications to websites to meet WCAG sooner rather than later.

Self-Evaluation Findings:

- The county website is <http://www.Jacksoncotn.com>. The website includes a number of pull-down menus and links that may be confusing for some people to use with ease.
- Information about ADA is extremely limited and includes only a link to the ADA Grievance Procedure.
- A number of interactive features are included on the website, community calendar, links to community and school websites, etc.

Recommended Action:

- The county's website should be periodically reviewed by the web developer to maintain, update, and monitor website accessibility. When the website is redone, consider simplification in the presentation of the information. Less pulldown menus are desired. Also consider a "Documents" page that includes all documents the public would normally look for.
- Consider adding a dedicated page for ADA and Title VI information that appears on the main county page. Additional ADA-related recommended website content should include publicity of its statement of ADA compliance, contact information for county ADA Coordinator, grievance and complaint procedures, publication of the self-evaluation and transition plan when completed, an annual list of ADA projects, and a list of the departments that offer TDD/TTY and the phone numbers.

3.9 Alternate Communication Formats

A public entity has a responsibility to provide information in alternative formats to comply with 28 CFR 35.160. This section of the ADA requires state and local government entities to communicate effectively with individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or have a speech, vision, or learning disability. Communication access involves providing content in methods that are understandable and usable by people with reduced or no ability to: speak, see, or hear and limitations in learning and understanding. Some alternative formats can be produced in-house at minimal costs, i.e. large print, disks, and e-mail attachments. Other formats, such as Braille and audio-formats, may need to be produced by a vendor. Alternate communication formats that are likely to be requested include, but are not limited to: audio-formats, Braille, large print, captioned films and video, electronic text/disk/CD-ROM, or sign interpreted films and video.

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Self-Evaluation Findings:

- The ADA Coordinator will be the main point of contact for requesting and providing information in alternate formats on a request for accommodation basis and will communicate with other departments as needed.
- No departments stated that they had received requests for documents to be provided in alternate formats.
- Most county departments and offices produce printed information that is distributed and available to the public.
- The county has not been asked to provide written materials and publications in Braille or large print text.
- No departments have a standard procedure to communicate and produce accessible alternate formats for people with disabilities.

Recommended Action:

- The county should provide staff training regarding the requirements of accessible alternate formats, what accessible alternate formats are, and how to provide accessible alternate formats.
- Procedures and methods should be established for the development of accessible alternate formats of documents to ensure that requests are handled in a uniform and consistent manner.

3.10 Fees and Surcharges

Public entities may not charge a fee or add a surcharge to a fee to cover the cost of making its facilities, programs, services, or activities accessible to persons with disabilities (28 CFR 35.130(f)).

Self-Evaluation Findings:

- There was no evidence of fees charged to individuals with disabilities that were not charged to individuals without disabilities to access programs, services, and activities.

Recommended Action:

- The county should continue to monitor and review policies and practices to ensure that fees and surcharges are not charged to individuals with disabilities that were not charged to individuals without disabilities.

3.11 Information and Signage

A public entity is required to ensure that individuals with disabilities are directed to an accessible entrance to a building and to the location and existence of accessible services, activities, and facilities. The ISA shall be used at each accessible entrance of a facility (28 CFR 35.163). Paragraph (b) requires the public entity to provide signage at all inaccessible entrances to each of its facilities that directs users to an accessible entrance or to a location with information about accessible facilities.

Self-Evaluation Findings:

- Accessible directional and informational signs are provided at a few county facilities, but not all. Inaccessible entrances typically do not provide signage at all, or provide insufficient or unclear signage, directing users to accessible entrances.
- Signage within county buildings varies greatly. Some of the highly trafficked facilities, such as the Jail and the Courthouse, provide compliant signage, but the smaller facilities frequently exhibit non-compliances including the following: signage is often missing, mounted in the wrong location, lacks tactile characters and/or Braille, has Braille that is not below all tactile characters or that does not provide proper spacing from lettering, etc.

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Recommended Action:

- An accessible signing strategy for the non-compliant county facilities should be developed for interior and exterior directional, informational, and permanent room signs.
- Design standards for accessible signs should be created to guide the production and installation of the accessible signs.
- Signage replacement projects should include replacement or installation of accessible signs as required.

3.12 Staff Training

On-going compliance with the ADA can only be achieved if county staff receives training and education about the rights of persons with disabilities and the obligations of public entities and its employees under Title II of the ADA. Although training is not required by the ADA, training regarding the requirements of the ADA is recommended.

Self-Evaluation Findings:

- The ADA Coordinator has attended ADA training provided at County Government Conferences.
- Election Commission staff has had minimal training on the proper procedures for setting up voting locations and how to be in compliance with ADA accessibility laws. Staff reviewed several voting precincts in 2016 using a standard form.
- Several departments suggested in-house education for employees on ADA-related topics.
- Several departments indicated an overall training on disabilities covered by the ADA and responsibilities for accommodation, including planning ahead for accommodation where possible, would be helpful.

Recommended Action:

- The ADA Coordinator and other key staff should consider annual training on various ADA issues relevant to their respective department responsibilities.
- Training materials and handbooks should be prepared, if needed, in alternate formats.
- It is recommended that the Sheriff's Department officers receive training annually on ADA accessibility issues related to their activities. Training could include how to interact with people with mental illnesses, addictive disorders, mental retardation, autism, and developmental disabilities, communicating with people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

3.13 Emergency Evacuation Procedures

The county is required to establish emergency evacuation procedures to safely evacuate persons with disabilities who may need special assistance in an emergency. These plans and procedures should include identification of assembly locations for persons with disabilities in each facility, staff assigned to ensure that assembly areas are checked prior to leaving buildings during an emergency, identification of assembly locations for pickup and transport of persons with disabilities, and location of accessible shelters to be used for various types of emergencies. Depending on the nature of the emergency, some shelters may not be appropriate.

Self-Evaluation Findings:

- The Jackson County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) works in conjunction with the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA), United States Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and many other State and Federal agencies. They also work with local and county response agencies of all types, ensuring preparedness

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and response capabilities for any manmade or natural disaster that may occur anywhere within Jackson County. The EMA is responsible for writing, updating, and disseminating the Jackson County Basic Emergency Operations Plan (BEOP), Strategic Preparedness Plan, Standard Operating Procedures, Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), and Mutual Aid Agreements (Putnam County EMA).

- The BEOP was last updated in July of 2018. The BEOP is not available on the county website for public access.
- The BEOP does include a list of individuals in the county with special needs, disabilities, and others that may need to be evacuated in case of an emergency.
- The BEOP include a listing of emergency support functions and the agencies providing those services. It is assumed written agreements with voluntary organizations and mutual aid agreements between responding organizations and other local, state, federal, and private organizations are referenced and/or located in the EOC.
- In Jackson County, critical information necessary for public dissemination will be made available through various media outlets, including local television stations, local radio, newspapers, reverse 911, and web-based systems. The BEOP indicates that local radio, public access television, local computer and IT companies, and Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) may be used to assist with communication in event of an emergency.
- EMA is responsible for selecting, staffing, and operating emergency mass care shelters during disasters. The American Red Cross is the national agency charged with responsibility for disaster relief services. The policy states “All shelter and mass care services will be provided without regard to economic status, racial, religious, political, ethnic, or other affiliation”, it also denotes this provision to persons with disabilities. It also states that “Area nursing homes that require movement of patients to a shelter will also move the nursing staff, along with the patient’s records and medications to the established shelter”. A majority of persons in nursing homes are likely to be disabled. The American Red Cross is charged with maintaining a list of shelters to be used in the event of an evacuation or emergency and assists in coordinating transportation for the public to these locations depending on the nature of the emergency. There is nothing that specifically mentions the need to ensure shelters are accessible or the need to provide accommodations for persons with disabilities at shelters, including those with service animals.
- Local schools are mentioned in the BEOP as providing school buses for use in evacuations. These vehicles would include those capable of transporting persons with wheelchairs or other mobility devices, or vehicles large enough to transport special medical equipment that may be needed.
- During disaster operations, numerous private sector and private nonprofit organizations provide resources. Included among these are the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, various church-related groups, Chamber of Commerce, animal rescue groups, and local businesses.

Recommended Action:

- Consider providing the BEOP on the County web site.
- The EMA should identify potential sources of equipment that can be made available for persons with disabilities in the event of an emergency. This equipment could include wheelchairs, walkers, etc. that might be left behind at homes or damaged during an evacuation.

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3.14 Employment

Title I of the ADA requires public entities not to discriminate against persons with disabilities in all parts of the recruitment and employment process (28 CFR 35.140 and 29 CFR 1630.4).

Self-Evaluation Findings:

- The Jackson County Government Employee Handbook (Revision Date November 2012) includes:
 - o 'Introduction' includes the statement, "It is the intention of Jackson County Government to adhere to all State and Federal laws. Any personnel policy found to be in conflict with a State or Federal law will be changed to ensure compliance with the law.". That would include ADA.
 - o The 'Non-Discrimination and Harassment Equal Employment Opportunity' section includes 'Equal Employment Opportunity Policy', on pages 17, 29-32. It states, "Discrimination against any person in recruitment, examination, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or discipline because of political or religious opinions or affiliations or because of race, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, veteran status, or any other category protected by law, shall be prohibited.". It also provides a grievance procedure.
 - o The sub-section entitled 'Reasonable Accommodations/Modified Job Duties' on page 31 addresses assisting employees that are or become disabled with "reasonable accommodations to enable such employees to continue performing the essential functions of their jobs". This sub-section also discusses the limitations of accommodations and undue hardship and the procedure to request reasonable accommodation.
 - o Under the section 'Personnel Files', it states that there is "restricted access to certain types of employee information. The following records of government employees will not be open for inspection by members of the public:". The records do include disability status or requests for accommodation, which may be considered medical records.
- A poster entitled "Equal Opportunity is the Law", defining the requirements of Title VII, is located in most county buildings.

Recommended Action:

- The county should continue to practice the county policies of non-discrimination as required by ADA and other applicable laws.
- Consider including a grievance form that includes all required information consistent with the grievance procedure in the work place.
- Consider additional language regarding the ADA in personnel policy manuals, possibly a section entitled "ADA Compliance". The following example information could be included in this section:
 - o Under the section 'Personnel Files', add specific language exempting an employee's disability status and requests for job-related accommodation due to a disability to the list of records that are not available to the public for inspection.
 - o For jobs that require a post-offer physical prior to employment, consider use of a 'Conditional Offer of Employment' form. An individual who cannot be reasonably accommodated for a job, without undue hardship, does not have to be selected or retained in a position.
 - o Members of the public, including individuals with disabilities and groups representing individuals with disabilities, are encouraged to submit suggestions to the Jackson County ADA Coordinator on how the county might better meet the needs of individuals with disabilities pursuant to employment policies.

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o Employee requests for an accommodation should be required to be submitted in writing on an ADA Reasonable Accommodation Request form. This form should be developed and made available at the HR Department.

o Any employee who believes he/she has received treatment inconsistent with the policies set forth in the policy manual or any other requirement of the ADA, can file a complaint within ninety (90) days of the date of the alleged discriminatory act or practice with the Jackson County ADA Coordinator.

- Ensure that a poster entitled “Equal Opportunity is the Law”, defining the requirements of Title VII, is located in every county building.
- Add the statement Jackson County Government does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, or disability, in employment or the provision of services.” to all employment applications and web sites advertising the same.
- Perform a thorough review of all job descriptions and amend as needed to ensure that:
 - o All sections in all job descriptions are complete.
 - o That the ‘Physical Demands’ for jobs are accurate and reasonable for each job and remove functions that are not required.

3.15 Department Self-Evaluation Findings and Recommendations

Additional inquiries were also made during the facility evaluations. A general summary follows.

Self-Evaluation Findings:

- The county has numerous departments with extensive, daily public interaction both in person and over the telephone.
- No departments responded that the programs offered for persons with disabilities were different in any way.
- No boards or commissions appear to regularly place ADA statement on agendas.
- No accommodation requests appear to have been made during public meetings.

Recommended Action:

- Public interactions with persons needing special accommodation due to a disability is likely to occur for all departments at some point. Training should be provided to all departments to review how to accommodate various disabilities and provide the same level of service.
- Continue to ensure that all programs offered do not segregate customers with disabilities or do not provide the same type and level of service.
- Some departments evaluated have barriers present, nearly all of which can be addressed by architectural modifications, various methods of equal accommodation, or changes in procedures.
- Funding will be a key component in some instances but many improvements in service to persons with disabilities can be done inexpensively and within a short timeframe.
- The report includes a number of ways that departments can accommodate persons with various disabilities, but circumstances and barriers vary between departments. Training of staff is a key component to knowing how to accommodate and provide equal service to persons with disabilities of all kinds.

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3.16 Facility Self-Evaluation Findings and Recommendations

A comprehensive review of accessibility at all public areas of these facilities was performed consistent with ADASAD.

County Facilities (Owned, Leased, or House Programs)

- Jackson County Courthouse
- Jackson County Jail
- Charles Ralph Holland Memorial Library
- Health Department
- Jackson County Memorial Building
- UCHRA
- Fairview Senior Center
- Granville Senior Center
- Jackson County Archives
- Center Grove Comm. Center
- Dodson Branch Comm. Center
- Fairgrounds Comm. Building

Recommended General Actions:

- Specific priorities for each facility and corrections needed, with planning level costs, to fully comply with ADA standards are included in the following section of this report and the appendices.
- In some cases, comprehensive costs for alteration of some spaces, especially restrooms, may not be possible due to additional investigation required outside the scope of an ADA self-evaluation. Additional investigations required for spaces that need to be enlarged by removing a wall could include structural review for load bearing, review of plumbing or ductwork in the wall, etc.

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- There are many interim fixes that can be implemented immediately to address various deficiencies and provide equal access to all users until permanent solutions are implemented. Other improvements are relatively low cost and should also be considered for implementation in early phases of the Transition Plan. These include:
 - o Restripe parking lots to provide compliant spaces and access aisles, with proper signage, at locations closest to accessible entrances at all facilities. When a facility has multiple parking lots, precedence should be given to the lots that have the most use by the public and are closest to facility entrances or amenities. However, all lots that serve an accessible entrance must provide accessible spaces.
 - o Work closely with local governments and TDOT to ensure that public ROW facilities, including on street parking, are placed proximal to accessible entrances at county facilities and that spaces are properly marked and signed.
 - o For objects that protrude inside buildings, either move these items closer to the floor where they are cane detectable, move them outside the pedestrian circulation route in buildings, or place a permanent object that is cane detectable below them.
 - o Provide a cup dispenser at all non-compliant drinking fountains below 48" height at a level location that can be used by anyone at functional drinking fountains, along with a waste container, until a new compliant hi-lo drinking fountain is installed.
 - o Develop a lockset replacement plan for all doors that have knobs and/or locks that require grasping and turning to open. In rooms with doors that have knobs, ensure staff can see into the hallway in

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the event someone on the outside cannot open the door. Consider a policy that doors with noncompliant hardware are left open at all times during business hours.

- o In rooms with light switches above 48" that are operated by the public, consider installation of occupancy sensors and timer controls for lighting control. The 1991 ADAAG allows up to 54" height, so in many cases this recommendation is not required until the space is altered.

- o In areas that have all electrical outlets below 15" and/or above 48", consider mounting a power strip or extension cord to the wall that is accessible within the required height range. This is especially important in today's electronic age, with people often looking to charge their mobile devices.

- o Ensure that compliant pedestrian routes exist from parking to the accessible entrances for all buildings. This may entail new construction or reconstruction of existing sidewalks.

- o Review corrective actions needed for at least one accessible set of restrooms for each facility initially and provide signage to direct persons from non-accessible restrooms to the accessible one. Depending on the size and use of a facility, one set may not be adequate and one set per floor or wing may be more appropriate.

- o Consider automatic door openers at facilities with inadequate space in alcoves, excessive opening force requirements, or closing speeds that are too fast for exterior doors.

- o Ensure that all departments that have public contact at service counters with a surface above 34" have compliant work surfaces available for persons to complete paperwork or review documents. A clipboard can be used as an accommodation temporarily until the counter can be altered.

- o Move furniture or other obstructions that could be in the way of required clear spaces for persons using wheelchairs, such as door maneuvering spaces, operable parts of various items, etc.

- o Lower or install an additional coat hook in each restroom stall and room where coats may be hung on the wall that is at 48" maximum height.

- o Consider installation of kick plates on the push side of all doors with glass below 10" above the floor to prevent glass breakage by wheelchair users.

- o Reposition items in restrooms that are too high, including soap dispensers, mirrors, paper towel dispensers, etc. In some instances, it may be less costly to provide an additional amenity within compliant height (e.g., add a second mirror on different wall, install a second soap dispenser, etc.)

4.0 Transition Plan

The Transition Plan describes how Jackson County will be transitioning to full compliance with the ADA and its applicable standards. Public entities, like the county, are required to provide access to county programs, services, and activities for all recipients. Thus, the county must provide access for individuals with disabilities and document areas of non-compliance. Additional documentation should be provided as barriers are removed. If structural changes are identified to provide program accessibility as part of the self-evaluation, ADA identifies specific elements to be included in the transition plan. At a minimum, the elements of the Transition Plan are:

- 1) A list of the physical barriers in the county's facilities that limit the accessibility of its programs, activities, or services to individuals with disabilities [28 CFR 35.150 (d)(3)(i)]

- 2) A detailed outline of the methods to be utilized to remove these barriers and make the facilities accessible [28 CFR 35.150 (d)(3)(ii)]

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3) The schedule for taking the necessary steps to achieve compliance with Title II of the ADA. If the time period for achieving compliance is longer than one year, the plan should identify the interim steps that will be taken during each year of the transition period [28 CFR 35.150 (d)(3)(iii)]

4) The name of the official responsible for the plan's implementation. [28 CFR 35.150 (d)(3)(iv)] The transition plan is a reaction to the findings of the facility audits, assessments of county policies, services, programs, and activities, and input from the public. Recommended actions for county policies and programs can be found in Section 3.0. The specific architectural and site improvement modifications required to make programs accessible are listed in the Jackson County Facility Reports. Facility reports include buildings and their related grounds that are owned, operated, or leased by Jackson County or facilities that provide programs of Jackson County Government. Each facility report contains a list of items that do not meet current ADASAD standards and suggested barrier removal actions. Not all of these barriers must be removed by making renovations to the facilities in order to provide program compliance with the ADA. Removing barriers limiting access to programs or those which present a safety hazard should be the county's first priority.

4.1 Phasing of Corrections

A phased implementation of the required corrections to remove physical barriers at county-owned facilities is recommended. The county has limited funds and cannot immediately make all facilities fully compliant with ADA standards. Prior to setting priorities, baseline criteria needed to be established to develop a starting point for ranking the deficient facilities identified during the self-evaluation. Site priorities were determined by evaluating each site's level of use, social need, civic function, and the general uniqueness of the site. At the time of the development of this report, no public complaints had been received about county-owned facilities. Complaints were not used as criteria to determine the phasing of improvements for any particular site, though future complaints could be the basis for funding improvements. Each of these criteria is assumed to have equal weight and no priority over another:

- Level of Use: Is the facility utilized quite frequently and by a large cross-section of the public?
- Social Need: Does the facility provide a social service or program for less fortunate or transient citizens?
- Civic Function: Does the facility provide access to civic programs and services that implement the civil and political rights provided by the government?
- General Uniqueness of the Site: Does the building, facility, or site provide a distinct program or service that cannot occur at a different location or facility?

4.2 Priorities for Barrier Removal

In creating priorities, it should be the county's intent to evaluate all areas of potential deficiency and to make structural changes where necessary and when equal accommodation cannot be made in another manner. The assignment of priorities is intended to facilitate public review and to address specific concerns of the local disabled community. It must be emphasized that it is the county's intention that all individuals with all types of disabilities be reasonably accommodated to provide access to all programs offered at all facilities. The timing of the improvements by site within each transition phase will be determined by the county based on their preferences and criteria. In general, the required physical improvements to meet ADA specifications at county facilities were split into three priority groups:

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- High priority improvements
- Medium priority improvements
- Low priority improvements

All barriers are not equal in the impact they have on persons with various disabilities to have equal access to county facilities or programs. Following evaluation of all facilities and programs, a prioritization was done to identify a ranking system to utilize when determining which capital improvements need to be considered first and those that could be implemented in subsequent years.

1. High priority barriers prohibit access for disabled persons, make access extremely troublesome, or present safety hazards to all users. These barriers likely do not have acceptable alternative routes or treatments to overcome the barrier. Typically, these barriers are significant obstacles located at entry walks and doors, interior corridors, curb ramps, rest rooms, and transaction and information counters. Examples of high priority barriers would include:
 - lack of barrier-free parking
 - lack of accessible route to the building's door
 - stairs where ramps or level surface are needed
 - doors that are too narrow
 - lack of elevator in a multi-level building
 - extremely non-compliant slopes for accessible routes or ramps
 - displacements in walks or high thresholds
 - some signage (particularly those related to life/safety)
2. Medium priority barriers partially prohibit access or make access quite difficult for disabled persons. For medium priority barriers, alternative routes or treatments to overcome the barrier may or may not exist. Typically, these barriers are obstacles to amenities such as secondary entry points, light switches, vending machines, and drinking fountains. Medium priority barriers may also be barriers which are significant obstacles prohibiting access but for which alternative access is available or assistance is readily available to navigate around the barrier. The presence of the medium priority barrier possibly causes a minor hazard to a disabled person who is attempting to use the facility. Examples of medium priority barriers would include:
 - minor non-compliant slopes
 - some signage
 - minor issues with doors (small dimensional non-compliance, opening force and closing speed)
 - non-compliant dimensional issues (vestibules, corridors, etc.)
 - stairwell/stair issues, particularly where an elevator is not available
 - accessible restrooms
 - accessible work and service counters
 - moderately non-compliant dimensional issues
 - some protruding objects
3. Low priority barriers typically do not limit access to facilities or services for disabled persons. For low priority barriers, alternative routes or treatments are typically available or assistance can be provided to overcome the barrier. It is not likely that the presence of a low priority barrier would cause a danger to a disabled person who is attempting to use or access the facility. Examples of low priority barriers would include:
 - limited signage issues

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- minor issues with light switches, electrical outlets, etc.
- minor non-compliant dimensional issues

For the purposes of this report, a 10-year time frame was utilized. Using this, it is conceivable that at the end of 10 years, all non-compliant ADA issues would be addressed throughout all current county-owned facilities. This assumes that standards and guidelines are not modified. This further assumes that funding is available each budget cycle to make the necessary improvements. It is highly unlikely given the economy that this is realistic, particularly when considering that there are also likely to be a large number of other improvements needed by the county as part of regular maintenance, upkeep, and repairs. In some instances, it may be advantageous to construct all improvements at a site at once rather than correct the high priority barriers first and come back at a later date to correct the medium or low priority barriers. For some sites, the total cost of construction for the corrections requires that they be spread out over two or more phases. Jackson County has the right to modify the priorities based on funding levels and changes in county programs, activities, and services to have flexibility in accommodating community requests and complaints. Interim resolutions, such as assigning aids, temporary signing for alternate routes or sites, and modifications of programs, activities, and services may be implemented at the county's discretion to handle existing insufficiencies or access complaints received. All costs noted are 2019 cost opinions. These cost opinions are subject to change based on market conditions, economic conditions, inflation, material selection, etc. Multiple phases of projects, multiple bidding packages, design parameters, etc. all have an impact on project costs that cannot be finitely identified in a study with this level of detail and uncertainty related to funding.

County Buildings

Jackson County Courthouse Assessment

101 Hull Ave. Gainesboro, Tn.

To the best of our knowledge the JC Courthouse meets all the ADA requirements necessary. The weaknesses are:

1. There is no elevator but we do have a wheelchair lift that needs replacing in the future.
2. Handicap parking is adequate but signs are faded and need replacing.
3. Wheelchair ramp on west side of courthouse is cracked and needs concrete replaced.

Charles Ralph Holland Memorial Library

205 W. Hull Ave. Gainesboro, Tn.

To the best of our knowledge the library meets all the ADA requirements necessary. The weaknesses are:

1. The Wheelchair ramp needs improvement.
2. Doors need to be updated in the future.

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Jackson County Memorial Bldg.

207 W. Hull Ave. Gainesboro, Tn.

The Memorial building needs some improvements in ADA compliance. The handicap doorway downstairs is adequate but has barriers that can be moved. The building has an upstairs but no elevator which creates a deficiency. We do not have any public offices upstairs but a non-profit working with addiction recovery does use some space. If necessary, we move the class downstairs to accommodate individuals. We have added the addition of an elevator to our transition for the future. We must note that it might be better to close the upstairs and move classes because of costs. The building is very old with limited ability to install an elevator.

Jackson County Veterans and Archives Bldg.

104 Short St. Gainesboro, Tn.

To the best of our knowledge the library meets all the ADA requirements necessary. The weaknesses are small doorways and hallway. This can be rectified by moving objects out of hallways.

Jackson County Health Department

North Murray St. Gainesboro, Tn.

There are no deficiencies at this building.

JC Ambulance & 911

316 N. Murray St. Gainesboro, Tn.

This building is not open to public access but is ADA compliant.

Jackson County Jail

620 Hospital Dr. Gainesboro, Tn.

This building does not have any deficiencies.

JC Sherriff Training Center

134 Doe Creek Ln. Gainesboro, Tn.

This building does not have any deficiencies.

JC Airport

Big Bottom Rd. Gainesboro, Tn.

This facility does not have any deficiencies.

JC Rescue Squad

703 School Dr. Gainesboro, Tn.

This building is not open to public access but also has no deficiencies.

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Solid Waste Buildings:

Jackson County Recycling Ctr.

Borden St. Gainesboro, Tn.

This building is not open to public access.

JC Convenience Ctr. Jennings Creek

1500 Jennings Creek Hwy. Gainesboro, Tn.

This building is not open to public access.

JC Convenience Ctr. Dodson Branch Community

Dodson Branch Hwy. Cookeville, TN.

This building is not open to public access.

JC Convenience Ctr. Shiloh Community

811 P. Brewington Rd. Cookeville, Tn.

This building is not open to public access.

JC Convenience Ctr. Fairgrounds

1010 Fairgrounds Lane Gainesboro, Tn.

This building is not open to public access.

JC Convenience Ctr. Fairview Community

2230 York Hwy. Gainesboro, Tn.

This building is not open to public access.

JC Convenience Ctr. Granville Community

6026 Granville Hwy. Granville, Tn.

This building is not open to public access.

Jackson County Highway Dept.

430 Baugh Hollow Gainesboro, Tn.

This building is not open to public access.

Community Centers:

Center Grove Community Center

113 Seven Knobs Rd. Gainesboro, Tn.

This facility does not have any deficiencies.

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Fairgrounds Community Center

1010 Fairgrounds Lane Gainesboro, TN.

This facility does not have any deficiencies.

Fairview Community Center

2230 York Hwy. Gainesboro, Tn.

This facility does not have any deficiencies.

Nameless Community Center

1570 Shepardsville Hwy. Bloomington Springs, Tn.

This facility does not have handicap parking signs.

Granville Community Center

6025 Granville Hwy. Granville, Tn.

This facility does not have any deficiencies.

Shiloh Community Center

813 P. Brewington Rd. Cookeville, Tn.

This facility does not have handicap parking signs.

Dodson Branch Community Center

16160 Dodson Branch Hwy. Cookeville, Tn.

This facility does not have any deficiencies.

JACKSON COUNTY ADA SELF EVALUATION STUDY AND TRANSITION PLAN FACILITY SUMMARY

Name & Location	Ownership Status	Low Priority	Medium Priority	High Priority	Total Cost
Jackson County Courthouse 101 Hull Ave. Gainesboro, Tn.	County Owned	\$ 500.00	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 130,500.00
Charles Ralph Holland Memorial Library 205 Hull Ave. Gainesboro, Tn.	County Owned		\$ 25,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Jackson County Memorial Building 207 Hull Ave. Gainesboro, Tn.	County Owned		\$ 200,000.00		\$ 200,000.00
Shiloh Community Center 813 P. Brewington Rd. Cookeville, Tn.	County Owned	\$ 500.00			\$ 500.00
Nameless Community Center 1570 Shepardsville Hwy. Bloomington Springs, Tn.	County Owned	\$ 500.00			\$ 500.00

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JACKSON COUNTY ADA SELF EVALUATION STUDY AND TRANSITION PLAN FACILITY TIME-LINE SUMMARY

Name & Location	Description	Priority	Time-Line
Jackson County Courthouse 101 Hull Ave. Gainesboro, Tn.	There is no elevator but we do have a wheelchair lift that needs replacing in the future.	Low	2028
Jackson County Courthouse 101 Hull Ave. Gainesboro, Tn.	Handicap parking is adequate but signs are faded and need replacing	Medium	2020
Jackson County Courthouse 101 Hull Ave. Gainesboro, Tn.	Wheelchair ramp on west side needs concrete replaced.	High	2021
Charles Ralph Holland Memorial Library 205 Hull Ave. Gainesboro, Tn.	The wheelchair ramp needs improving.	High	2020
Charles Ralph Holland Memorial Library 205 Hull Ave. Gainesboro, Tn.	Entrance doors need to be updated.	Medium	2022
Jackson County Memorial Building 207 Hull Ave. Gainesboro, Tn.	Elevator Installation	Medium	2028
Shiloh Community Center 813 P. Brewington Rd. Cookeville, Tn.	Handicap Parking signs need to be installed.	Low	2021
Nameless Community Center 1570 Shepardsville Hwy. Bloomington Springs, Tn.	Handicap Parking signs need to be installed.	Low	2021

Appendix D

Forms and Notices

JACKSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

Grievance Procedure under The Americans with Disabilities Act

This Grievance Procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the County. The County's Personnel Policy governs employment-related complaints of disability discrimination.

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, phone number of complainant and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.

The complaint should be submitted by the grievant and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation to:

Sherrie Pippin Loftis, ADA Coordinator
P.O. Box 342
Gainesboro, TN 38562
(931) 268-9516
sherrie.loftis@tncourts.gov

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the ADA coordinator or his designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and the possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days of the meeting, the ADA coordinator or his designee will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in format accessible to the complainant, such as large print, Braille, or audio tape. The response will explain the position of the County and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint. If the response by the ADA coordinator or his designee does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant and/or his/her designee may appeal the decision of within 15 calendar days after receipt of the response to the County Mayor or his designee. Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the County Mayor or his designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting the County Mayor or his designee will respond in writing, and, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint.

Jackson County Tennessee ADA GRIEVANCE FORM

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 states that no person in the United States shall be subjected to discrimination in any program, service, or activity due to a qualifying disability. This form may be used to file a complaint with the Jackson County Government based on alleged violations of the ADA. You are not required to use this form; a letter that provides the same information may be submitted to file your complaint. Complaints should be filed within 180 days of the alleged discrimination. If you could not reasonably be expected to know the act was discriminatory within the 180-day period, you have 60 days after you became aware to file your complaint. If you need assistance completing this form, please contact Sherrie Pippin Loftis by phone at 931-268-9516 or via e-mail at sherrie.loftis@tncourts.gov.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____ (home) _____ (work) _____

(other) Individual(s) discriminated against, if different than above (use additional pages, if needed).

Name: _____ Date: _____

Street Address: _____

Town: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____ (home) _____ (work) _____ (other)

Please explain your relationship with the individual(s) indicated above:

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Name of agency and department or program that discriminated:

Agency or department name: _____

Name of individual (if known): _____

Jackson County Government ADA GRIEVANCE FORM (CONTINUED)

Date(s) of alleged discrimination:

Date discrimination began _____ Last or most recent date _____

Please explain as clearly as possible what happened.

Provide the name(s) of witness(es) and others involved in the alleged discrimination (attach additional sheets, if necessary, and provide a copy of written material pertaining to your case).

Signature: _____

Please return completed form to:

Sherrie Pippin Loftis, ADA Coordinator
P.O. Box 342
Gainesboro, TN 38562
(931) 268-9516
sherrie.loftis@tncourts.gov

Note: The County of Jackson prohibits retaliation or intimidation against anyone because that individual has either taken action or participated in action to secure rights protected by the ADA. Please inform the person listed above if you feel you were intimidated or experience perceived retaliation in relation to filing this complaint.

NOTICE UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

In accordance with the requirements of title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the Jackson County Government, will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities.

Employment: The County of Jackson 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 of Jackson will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in Jackson County 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.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures: The County of Jackson will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all Jackson County programs, services, and activities. For example, individuals with service animals are welcomed in Jackson County offices, even where pets are generally prohibited.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a Jackson County program, service, or activity, should contact the office of Sherrie Pippin Loftis as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event. The ADA does not require the County of Jackson to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

Complaints that a Jackson County program, service, or activity is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to Sherrie Pippin Loftis. The County of Jackson 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, such as retrieving items from locations that are open to the public but are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.

Americans with Disabilities Act Grievance Procedure

This grievance procedure is established to meet the requirements of the ADA. It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the Jackson County Government.

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, phone number, email address of complainant and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.

The complaint should be submitted as soon as possible, preferably within 60 calendar days of the alleged violation to:

Sherrie Pippin Loftis P.O. Box 342 P.O. Box 342 Gainesboro, TN 38562
(931)-268-9516 or at sherrie.loftis@tncourts.gov.

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, Sherrie Loftis will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and the possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days of the meeting, Sherrie Loftis will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in format that is accessible to the complainant, such as large print, Braille, or audio tape. The response will explain the position of the Jackson County Government and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

If the response by Sherrie Loftis does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant may appeal the decision within 15 calendar days after receipt of the response to the Jackson County Government or designee.

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the Jackson County Mayor Randy Heady or designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting, the Mayor, Randy Heady or designee will respond in writing, and, where appropriate, in a format that is accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint.