



City of Bloomington
COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY
ACCESSIBILITY

Council for Community Accessibility

2023 Annual Report

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Who We Are

The City of Bloomington's Council for Community Accessibility (CCA) is a volunteer commission that advocates for the interests of people with disabilities.

Initially formed in 1990 as the Community Council on Handicap Concerns, the group's first goal was to advise the City of Bloomington on accessibility improvements. Today, the CCA works in a variety of areas: promoting community awareness of disabilities, developing accessibility solutions, and partnering with local organizations who share our goals.

While they come from diverse backgrounds, CCA members share a personal interest in accessibility issues and bring a range of leadership experiences to their work on the Council. Many members have disabilities themselves or are family members of those with disabilities.

Objectives

- **Assessment:** To seek information about the needs and available services for persons with disabilities.
- **Awareness:** To educate all segments of the community.
- **Accessibility:** To promote access to places of public accommodation, housing, programs, and services.
- **Advocacy:** To promote the best interests of persons with disabilities by supporting specific, identified issues.
- **Advice:** To serve as a resource for the community.

2023 Events

Breaking down the Barriers



In April 2023, the Council for Community Accessibility held a Breaking Down the Barriers event. Members visited Bloomington businesses that have been awarded an AccessAbility decal to celebrate the purchasing power of the disability community.

At left: Lesley Davis and MarChe Daughtry visit Blondie's Cookies in College Mall.

ADA Anniversary Celebration

In July 2023, the Council for Community Accessibility held the annual ADA Anniversary Celebration in the Showers Plaza outside City Hall. Over 500 people visited this year.

At right: Guests enjoy the 2023 ADA Anniversary Celebration in July. Representatives included the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC), PALS, SICIL, Monroe County Public Library, Stone Belt, and Monroe County Special Olympics. In this photo, City of Bloomington IT Director Rick Dietz and his daughter select swag after doing an activity with Matt Norris from IIDC.



Gather 'round the Table



In October 2023, the Council for Community Accessibility held Gather 'round the Table, the annual event to bring together the disability community for conversation, learning, and a meal.

This year's theme was *The Fusion of Arts and Disabilities*. The four panelists worked in multiple mediums, including visual art, music, dance, theatre, and writing.

At left, a crowd of fifty people listens to the panelists.

Programs

AccessAbility Decal Program

This program, run by the Accessibility Committee, recognizes accessible businesses and provides guidance to businesses to eliminate barriers to accessibility. In the past they have worked on surveying polling locations, bus stops, schools, and medical offices.

At right, the current AccessAbility decal.



Mobility Aids Lending Library (MALL)



The Mobility Aids Lending Library (MALL) is a new initiative that has now achieved nonprofit status, begun by a local group of women known as “the Wheelie Women,” a group which includes CCA members. The program matches gently used mobility devices, free of charge, with those who cannot afford them or only need them for a short period of time.

At left, four of five members of MALL pose at the Monroe County Public Library with Michael Shermis, the CCA staff liaison. From left to right: Lesley Davis, Danielle Perdue, Michael Shermis, Karin Willison, and Casey Guarino, The fifth member, Susan Seizer, gifted Michael the “door key” (“dorky”) shirt.

2023 Goals in Review

In 2023, the Council for Community Accessibility members achieved the following progress on our 2023 goals in the areas of Advocacy, Inclusion, and Alliances.

Advocacy

1. Support the adoption of the Accessible Transportation and Mobility Principles by the Bloomington City Council.

- a. **Success:** The Accessible Transportation and Mobility Principles have been included in the larger Transportation Plan that will be passed by the Bloomington City Council in 2024. This is a huge success and will ensure greater involvement of people with disabilities in the conversation around transportation.
- 2. Pass a city-wide ordinance for captioning use on TVs in Bloomington.
 - a. **Success:** On December 13, 2023, Bloomington Ordinance 23-31 passed unanimously. This amends the Municipal Code to require places of public accommodation to activate closed captioning on televisions beginning in January 2025.
- 3. Co-host a mayoral candidate forum with Stone Belt.
 - a. **Success:** This event was held on March 30, 2023, and was well-attended and included insightful questions from Stone Belt clients and CCA members.
- 4. Form a working group that includes city leaders to explore how to improve the situation for those in the community who require personal care assistants.
 - a. **Continued Goal in 2024**

Inclusion

- 1. Increase awareness about and donations to the MALL (Mobility Aids Lending Library); transition categories of items to MCPL checkout.
 - a. **Success:** MALL is now registered as a nonprofit and has had tremendous success, with increased visibility and donations. Smaller mobility devices are now integrated into MCPL checkout within the Library of Things.
- 2. Complete the disability brochure/website for Visit Bloomington.
 - a. **Continued Goal in 2024**
- 3. Obtain permission to make and place Lego ramps at several City of Bloomington businesses and/or parklets; add new fields to accessibility surveys that specifically address the needs of deaf and blind patrons; offer staff trainings for targeted groups (e.g., wait staff); work to bring parking lots into compliance
 - a. **Continued Goal in 2024**

Alliances

- 1. Increase participation with and efforts to serve the deaf community and other underserved communities; engage in joint efforts with MCPL, SICIL, MCCSC, VITAL, IU ASL Club, Area 10, IU Health, and member organizations represented at monthly DSP meetings, among others
 - a. **Progress:** Engaged in joint efforts with MCPL, Stone Belt, and others. Alliances include Bloomington Transit, VITAL, IU-SPEA, MALL, and SICIL.

2024 Goals

At the January 29, 2024 meeting, Council for Community Accessibility members established the following goals for 2024 in the areas of Advocacy, Inclusion, and Alliances.

Advocacy

- 1. Support the official adoption of the Accessible Transportation and Mobility Principles by the City of Bloomington City Council.

2. Promote the rollout of the city-wide ordinance on closed captioning use on TVs in Bloomington, which will take effect on January 1, 2025.
3. Co-host a “Meet the Mayor” event with Stone Belt held at Stone Belt on March 26th.
4. Work with city leaders to explore ways to more thoroughly include and provide equity of access to the Bloomington Disabled community across all sectors, including housing, education, employment, emergency preparedness, and access to goods and services.
5. Hold the Gather ‘round the Table event and focus it on housing with inclusive design in the new Hopewell neighborhood.
6. Provide information about accessibility (ADA basics) to any government office that requires permits/approvals with a brochure that provides information about CCA’s services.

Inclusion

1. Increase awareness about and donations to the MALL and find a storage location for larger items.
2. Complete the disability brochure/website for Visit Bloomington.
3. Make all Bloomington public accommodation as accessible as possible through adding new fields to accessibility surveys specifically addressing the needs of deaf and blind patrons, offering staff trainings, and bringing parking lots into compliance.

Alliances

1. Increase participation with and efforts to serve the deaf community and other underserved communities
2. Expand the network of CCA partners through engaging in joint efforts with MCPL, SICIL, MCCSC, VITAL, IU ASL Club, Area 10, IU Health, IU Accessible Educational Services, Habitat for Humanity, ADA Indiana, and member organizations represented at monthly Disability Service Provider Coalition meetings, among others.
3. Work with the City of Bloomington Engineering Department to collaborate on a workshop on Designing/Constructing Pedestrian Facilities for ADA Compliance and Accessibility. This was done in 2022 with great success.

Services

Awareness Training

The CCA provides disability awareness training for organizations, businesses, and government employees.

Disabilities Awareness Presentations

The CCA, through our Speakers Bureau, offers disability awareness presentations to schools, religious groups, and civic organizations.

Free Consultations

The CCA can, in free consultations, review building or architectural plans to evaluate accessibility according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) specifications.

Workshops for Businesses

The CCA offers workshops for businesses on the benefits and responsibilities of complying with the ADA.

Committees

Accessibility Committee

The Accessibility Committee runs the AccessAbility Decal Program. Volunteers survey businesses and award window decals to those who achieve accessibility criteria.

At left: One of Bloomington's recently certified businesses, Heartwork Brewing, now proudly displays an AccessAbility decal. Jeff Browne, co-owner, said he felt great about their business being accessible.



Activities and Events Committee



The Activities and Events Committee plans programs and events throughout the year to foster community awareness of disabilities.

At left, CCA member Casey Guarino speaks at Gather 2023: she led the event planning for this year's highly successful event.

Transportation and Mobility Committee

The Transportation and Mobility Committee examines and acts on ways for people with disabilities to move more comfortably and efficiently through the community.

At right, members of the Transportation and Mobility Committee helped organize a training for the City of Bloomington Engineering staff. Committee and staff members walked routes in Bloomington to give the engineers insight on how people who are blind and/or who use wheelchairs navigate city sidewalks.



The Council for Community Accessibility is sponsored by the City of Bloomington

The Council for Community Accessibility meets the last Monday of each month from 4:00-5:30 p.m. in Bloomington City Hall (and on Zoom). All are welcome.

 CouncilforCommunityAccessibility

Web: bloomington.in.gov/cca

To receive the CCA newsletter or for other inquiries, e-mail cca@bloomington.in.gov or (812) 349-3471.

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