

ADA Basics

Inclusion: All girls are welcomed, included and valued and given opportunities to meaningfully participate in all activities.

- 1** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability. It affords similar protections against discrimination to Americans with disabilities as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on race, religion, sex, national origin, and other characteristics. Disability is defined by the ADA as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.”

At Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska, we want to go beyond the “letter of the law” and follow the “spirit of the law”: To take steps to ensure that Girl Scouts is welcoming and available to all girls regardless of ability and to ensure that each girl is able to participate in a meaningful way.

- 2** Person 1st Language: One of the easiest and most important ways to show our respect for all people is by training ourselves and our volunteers to use Person 1st Language.

We always put the person before the disability as a way to verbally emphasize the person’s individuality over their disability.

Ex: She has a learning disability. (Rather than: She is learning disabled). She receives special education services. (Rather than: She’s in special ed.). Accessible parking, hotel room, restroom, etc (Rather than: handicapped parking, hotel room, restroom, etc).

- 3** Respectful Accommodations: The ADA requires that places of public accommodation make reasonable accommodations so people with disabilities can access facilities and programs. A “respectful” accommodation goes beyond the “letter of the law” and is concerned with doing what is right for the person with the disability.

Not just “Can they get in the door?”, but rather “Can they access what’s on the other side?”

Some things to consider:

- Accessible Approach/ Entrance: People with disabilities should be able to arrive on the site, approach the building, and enter as freely as everyone else. At least one route of travel should be safe and accessible for everyone, including people without disabilities.
- Access to Goods and Services: Ideally, the layout of the building should allow people with disabilities to obtain materials or services without assistance.
- Usability of Rest Rooms: When rest rooms are open to the public, they should be accessible to people with disabilities.