

CITY CONNECTION

City Offers ADA Grievance Process

The City of Stillwater is committed to meeting the needs of all of its citizens and has been working hard to address requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act over the past several years. In 2005, the City formed an Accessibility Advisory Board that is charged with advising the City Manager and staff, as well as providing information and outreach to staff and citizens. The Board meets the first Tuesday of every month at noon in Room 2073 at City Hall, and meetings are open to the public.

Stillwater also has a simple process to allow citizens to report access problems or file a complaint claiming discrimination on the basis of a disability in the City's employment practices and policies or the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the City of Stillwater. The grievance process is designed to gather information directly from citizens and work to resolve issues as quickly and fairly as possible. Concerns about private property or businesses should be addressed directly with the business or property owner.

So, what do you do if you have an accessibility or discrimination concern? The first step is to write up the complaint with as much information as possible, including specific information such as the date, names of any people involved, the location, and the specific concern. Also be sure to include your name, address, and telephone number. If it is not possible to write the complaint, you can ask the City to file the complaint through an interview or recording.

The complaint should be submitted to the City ADA Coordinator as soon as possible after the incident, and no later than sixty days after it happened. This is to allow the City time to respond to your concern while it is still fresh.

After the ADA Coordinator receives the complaint, a meeting with the individual will be scheduled within 15 days to talk about possible resolutions and a potential timeline to address the concern. Within fifteen days after the meeting, the ADA Coordinator responds in writing (or in a format accessible to the complainant) with the proposed plan. Typically, most concerns will be resolved at this stage—usually complaints arise, in part, because the City is unaware of the situation. Once staff becomes aware of a concern, a plan and timeline are developed and the situation is addressed.

If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, an appeal may be made to the City Manager. The person filing the complaint has fifteen days after receiving the ADA Coordinator's response to file an appeal. Following the same pattern, within

fifteen days after receiving the appeal, the City Manager will schedule a meeting to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions.

Within ten days, the City Manager will respond with a final resolution of the complaint. However, if the individual filing the complaint is still not satisfied, the final step is to contact the U.S. Department of Justice or other appropriate state or federal agency.

Stillwater is fortunate to have this very straightforward process in place and citizens are encouraged to inform either the ADA Coordinator or members of the Accessibility Board about any concerns they might have regarding City services and functions.

Mary Rupp, Deputy City Manager, serves as the ADA Coordinator for the City of Stillwater. She may be reached at 723 S. Lewis, Stillwater, OK 74074, by phone at (405) 742-8209 or (405) 533-3701 (TDD), or by email at mrupp@stillwater.org.

City Connection is brought to you by the City of Stillwater as a public service to provide regular information about City services and to respond to general questions asked by the public about their local government. Today's information is provided by the City Manager's Office. For further information, please contact Patti Osmus at 405-742-8209 or by email at posmus@stillwater.org.