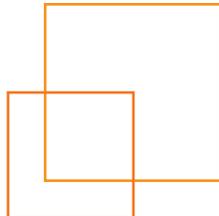
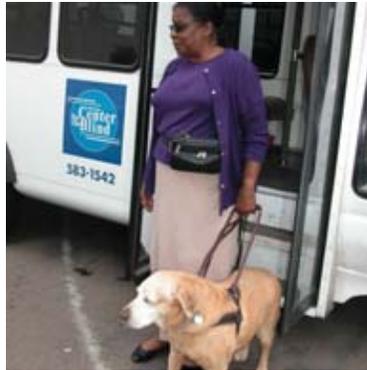
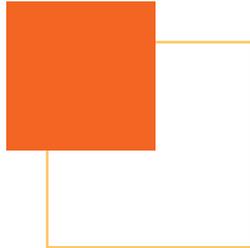


# Americans with Disabilities Act

## 2017 ACCESS PLAN

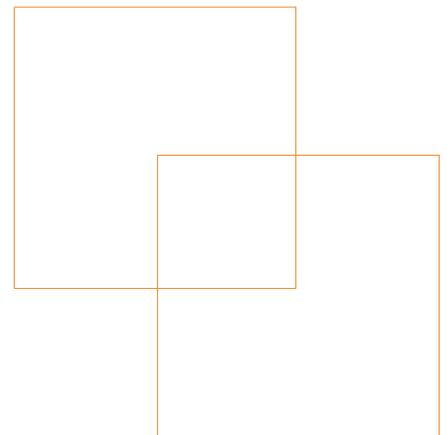


San Diego Association of Governments  
401 B Street, Suite 800  
San Diego, CA 92101



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# Overview of the ADA and SANDAG Responsibilities

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Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), enacted on July 26, 1990 prohibits state and local governments from discriminating against persons with disabilities or from excluding participation in or denying benefits of programs, services, or activities to persons with disabilities.

As required by Title II, SANDAG performed a self-evaluation to examine its activities and services, identify problems or physical barriers that may limit accessibility to such activities and services by persons with disabilities, and describe potential compliance solutions in this ADA Access Plan. The self-evaluation is reviewed annually by SANDAG staff. The ADA requires that SANDAG prepare the Access Plan to describe the process for making any changes to make SANDAG activities and services accessible as identified in the self-evaluation. This Access Plan is prepared pursuant to Title II and is intended to outline the methods by which changes will be or have been made to implement Title II's non-discrimination policies.

As in the past, SANDAG will continue to work with individuals with disabilities to find a mutually acceptable way to mitigate barriers to existing programs and facilities. This Access Plan is intended to serve as a step toward achieving this goal. The section of this Access Plan entitled "SANDAG Compliance Plan for FY 2017 describes the additional actions SANDAG intends to undertake as updates to its last Access Plan. The remaining sections of this Access Plan summarize the steps SANDAG already has in place to implement its previous Access Plans.

## **ADA Compliance Officer**

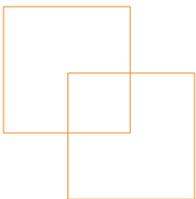
The Director of Administration has been designated as the SANDAG ADA Compliance Officer. The following tasks, duties, and responsibilities are included in the job description of the Director of Administration: oversee SANDAG compliance with disability discrimination laws, including but not limited to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## **Review of Organizational Policies**

The Office of General Counsel has reviewed the SANDAG Employee Handbook as well as all other organizational policies for compliance with the disability discrimination law. Documents are updated as needed to ensure continued compliance.

## **Reasonable Accommodation Requests**

All relevant SANDAG staff members have been trained on the procedure for handling a reasonable accommodation request from employees, directors, and members of the public. The Human Resources Manager oversees SANDAG's responses to all employee accommodation requests and consults with the ADA Compliance Officer and Office of General Counsel when needed. The ADA Compliance Officer oversees SANDAG's responses to requests for accommodation from non-employees and consults with the Office of General Counsel on such requests when needed.



# **SANDAG Compliance Plan for FY 2017**

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Using the section of the self-evaluation containing recommended areas of change, as well as recommendations from the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) from its April 2015 ADA Compliance Review, SANDAG has identified additional methods for meeting or exceeding those recommendations, which will be implemented as part of this Access Plan as set forth in this section.

## **Input from the Community with Disabilities**

This Access Plan and future updates will be provided to the Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC) for review and comment. The SSTAC membership includes persons with disabilities from the local area who are not employees of SANDAG. The SSTAC is asked to assist SANDAG on its self-evaluation and Access Plan in addition to assisting SANDAG with evaluating the impact of proposed projects and public programs on the community with disabilities, including public safety and emergency management; appropriate methods of communication, including electronic technology; and website accessibility. SANDAG documents participation by persons with disabilities in order to identify appropriate resolutions on ADA-related matters.

## **Accessible Documents**

In the summer of 2015 staff responsible for formatting documents for the public received training on Section 508 standards. SANDAG will be hiring a consultant in FY 2017 to further identify areas of improvement and to assist with developing an implementation plan.

## **Accessibility of Existing Facilities**

SANDAG leases 104,000 square feet at 401 B Street, San Diego, California. In February 2015, building management began modernizing the elevator system in the building's towers and parking structure. Full elevator modernization is expected to be 100% complete by the end of 2016. SANDAG has regular meetings with building management to address questions or concerns on ADA-related matters regarding visual, audible, and touch features of the new elevator system. Although the entire system is ADA compliant, our conversations have resulted in adjustments being made to audible messaging volumes as well as consideration to modify "lobby" call buttons on tower floors to be easier to recognize.

The toll road operations center located at 1129 La Media Road, San Diego, California, recently conducted a space assessment in efforts to determine if off-site services can be consolidated to the La Media location. The building was built in 2007 in accordance with ADA requirements then in effect and is approximately 20,000 square feet. As a result of the space assessment, it has been determined that several walls will be moved to expand workspace availability. Proposed alterations will not affect the usability of the space, the path of travel, nor the primary function of the building. As the project moves forward, proposed modifications will be monitored and when required, be completed according to ADA technical guidelines.

## **Compliance with ADA for Public Business, Outreach, and Meetings**

The Director of Administration is the agency-wide ADA Coordinator and disseminates necessary contact information in various forums to the public, agency customers, vendors, and contractors; in public reception areas; and on the SANDAG website.

SANDAG has a link on its Public Information Office homepage to the ADA program/policy page that specifically includes ADA program information.

SANDAG provides specific ADA training to staff in spring 2015 and will provide additional training every two years to update staff on roles and responsibilities with regard to ADA implementation.

SANDAG Board Policy No. 009 includes add statements regarding effective communication, making reasonable modifications to SANDAG policies and programs, and not placing surcharges on modifications or auxiliary aids and services.

The SANDAG website notifies the public of TTD/TTY access to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided an appropriate phone number to call for any issue. The availability of SANDAG TTY equipment is included in a notice in the SANDAG lobby areas at 401 B Street to inform the public. The TTY equipment is provided at the 401 B Street location and staff has been instructed to include the TTY phone number on all documents where phone numbers are provided to the public for specific information on the agency's programs and services. A schedule of periodic equipment checks has been developed to ensure that all assisted listening devices and TTY equipment are in working order (i.e., included in routine physical or ergonomic inspections). Periodic training will be provided to SANDAG staff to ensure adequate knowledge of appropriate communication methods, resources, and etiquette when providing services to persons with disabilities.

At the 1129 La Media location, TTY equipment is installed with procedures similar to those established at 401 B Street.

## **Website**

SANDAG has a work plan to fully update its main website ([www.sandag.org](http://www.sandag.org)) and train relevant information technology staff and webpage contributors on accessibility features consistent with Version 2.0 of Web Content Accessibility guidelines (WCAG), released on December 11, 2008.

At this time, SANDAG websites are at an 80% or better compliance rate with ADA requirements. With over 20 external websites at various levels of compliance, it is expected remediation efforts to reach 100% compliance will take one to two years to review and modify all of SANDAG's websites. Remediation work began in the second quarter of FY 2014 and continued throughout FY 2015 and FY 2016. Staff continues to work toward 100% compliance.

## **Publications and Materials**

The public will be notified when the Access Plan and updates to the Plan are available for review, and how to provide comments to SANDAG regarding these documents.

All written and electronic publications will be available upon request in accessible formats for persons with visual and hearing disabilities.

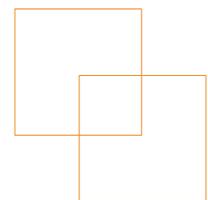
## **Complaint Procedures**

Training has been provided to staff to increase awareness of SANDAG Board Policy No. 009, which describes procedures for handling external ADA matters.

An ADA-specific complaint form is provided for the public to use. The goal of using the separate form is to avoid confusion and to maintain consistency and integrity about the type of information gathered to track and investigate an ADA inquiry, grievance, or complaint.

The complaint form and grievance procedure are available in alternate formats to assure accessibility by persons with sensory impairments.

Staff training on the ADA complaint procedure for non-employees will be provided at the time of hire for those staff engaged with the public and repeated with updates at least every two years to ensure knowledge of updated regulations, policies and processes, tools, and resources. SANDAG also will ensure consistency in training regarding practices and procedures, including documentation of complaints, to prevent duplication of efforts and costs.



# **Compliance for Existing and Constructed Facilities**

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## **ADA Building Compliance Survey for 401 B Street, San Diego, California**

An ADA compliance survey was prepared by the Irvine Company building management for the SANDAG main offices. This document was reviewed by the SANDAG Americans with Disabilities Coordinator in November 2013 and establishes compliance with the building accessibility requirements of Title II of the ADA for all SANDAG office space. Items reviewed included the notation of adequate parking spaces for persons with disabilities, lobby doors falling within ADA pull requirements, ease of elevator access, and the inclusion of emergency assistance procedures for the physically impaired.

## **ADA Compliance Survey for Other SANDAG Locations**

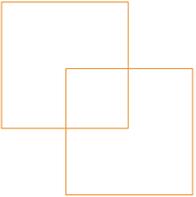
The SANDAG offices located at 1129 La Media Road, San Diego, as well as most other offices used by staff as project or construction site offices separate from 401 B Street, were constructed in accordance with existing ADA requirements at the time. Appropriate SANDAG staff has been provided legal advice on ADA requirements applicable to facilities used by the public, used solely by staff without disabilities, used by staff with accommodation needs, or any combination thereof to ensure facilities used by SANDAG meet all accessibility requirements.

## **Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

The Business and Facilities Services Manager has reviewed the emergency evacuation procedures implemented by building management at Wells Fargo Plaza and deems them to be compliant. Training of all staff on emergency evacuation procedures occurs on an annual basis. Each floor of the building where SANDAG staff work has an assigned floor warden trained specifically to assist individuals with disabilities during an emergency evacuation.

## **ADA Compliance on Facilities Constructed by SANDAG**

SANDAG constructs buildings, structures, sidewalks, curbs, and related transportation facilities that must comply with ADA requirements and various state codes created to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities.



# **Compliance with ADA for Public Business, Outreach, and Meetings**

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The ADA emphasis is on program accessibility. One aspect of making programs physically accessible to persons with disabilities is through structural modifications to SANDAG facilities. SANDAG has many public meetings at its facilities and in the community and encourages participation by the public. Therefore, SANDAG also has conducted a self-evaluation of its programs and procedures with regard to public contact. Public contact is typically defined as interaction between staff member(s) and member(s) of the general public. To ensure accessibility, various types of public contact are listed below:

## **Telephone**

SANDAG receives numerous calls on a daily basis requesting information on a wide range of topics. TTY equipment is available and relevant SANDAG staff has been trained on its use when requests are received. The public is informed of the availability of the TTY equipment in public notices, agendas, public outreach materials, and on the SANDAG website.

## **Internet**

SANDAG provides access to various types of information via its website. The public is able to obtain information regarding SANDAG programs, services, job openings, news and updates, contracting opportunities, and reports. The website is maintained consistent with ADA requirements to ensure it is accessible to persons with disabilities.

## **Email**

SANDAG provides information to the public through requests via email. The public is able to obtain information regarding SANDAG

programs, services, job openings, news and updates, contracting opportunities, and reports by emailing [webmaster@sandag.org](mailto:webmaster@sandag.org).

## **Request of Auxiliary Aids by the Public**

SANDAG provides notification to the public through statements on all public meeting agendas and announcements of the process for requesting auxiliary aids. Upon request, the following assistive services and devices may be made available (this list is not meant to be all-inclusive): large font type documents, documents on tape or in Braille, readers for individuals with visual impairments to review all pertinent material distributed on specific meeting agenda items, amplification or listening devices for individuals participating in meetings organized by SANDAG, interpreters, audio and/or written transcripts from meetings, and SANDAG-produced videos.

## **Depictions of Individuals with Disabilities**

To ensure the public is aware that SANDAG programs are inclusive of persons with disabilities, efforts are made to include individuals with disabilities in graphic depictions showing participants in SANDAG activities.

All informational brochures, booklets, and fliers distributed to the public contain the following or similar statement to provide notice of the public's right to seek accommodation:

"In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), this document is available in alternate formats by contacting the SANDAG ADA Coordinator at (619) 699-1900 or (619) 699-1904 (TTY)."

## **Counter Height Accommodation**

Where counter heights are too high to be accessible, an alternate transaction area has been identified, and clipboards are provided as an assistive device.

## **Advising All Individuals of SANDAG ADA Processes and Resources**

SANDAG takes steps to ensure all individuals - employees, applicants, and the public are advised of the requirements of ADA, and of the process and resources used by SANDAG to make services, activities, and programs accessible.

### **Accessible Public Meetings**

Public meetings are a part of SANDAG daily operations. Some meetings are formal and publicly noticed. Others are working sessions focusing on project management. Some examples are: Board of Directors' meetings, policy committee meetings, workshops and seminars, project meetings, pre-proposal meetings, advisory, task group, focus group, or ad hoc meetings, and community forums. Efforts are taken to ensure that all public meetings are reasonably accessible to persons with disabilities.

From time to time SANDAG meetings are held off-site. All relevant employees have been trained concerning the need to investigate sites where training or business will be conducted prior to the event to ensure the location is located in proximity to public transit if possible and is accessible to persons with disabilities.

SANDAG also co-hosts public meetings with partner agencies, such as Caltrans, local municipalities, and regional transit agencies. SANDAG adheres to the same standards of accessibility when conducting meetings in these co-hosted forums.

## **Notification of Accessibility at Public Meetings**

SANDAG agendas contain the following statement:

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), SANDAG will accommodate persons who require assistance in order to participate in SANDAG meetings. If such assistance is required, please contact SANDAG at (619) 699-1900 at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. To request this document or related reports in an alternative format, please call (619) 699-1900, (619) 699-1904 (TTY), or fax (619) 699-1905.

## **Accessibility at Public Events**

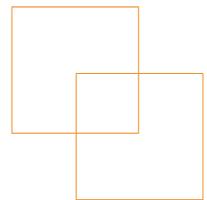
Efforts to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities at SANDAG public events include the following as appropriate: ADA accessible port-a-potties, ramps where applicable, proximity to public transit, designated parking spaces for those with disabilities, temporary transportation options such as golf carts to provide convenient access to event venues, sign language interpreters, and other assistance, as requested.

## **Contractor and Consultant Compliance with SANDAG ADA Policies**

SANDAG contracts with entities that provide a service, activity, or program to the public include a clause requiring compliance by the contractor or consultant with all SANDAG policies concerning ADA compliance and prohibitions against discrimination based on a disability or various health conditions. If a contract concerns construction or remodeling of a facility, the contract documents specify that the contractor is required to comply with ADA and building code requirements relevant to serving persons with disabilities.

## **Review of Published Reports**

The Director of Communications has been assigned to review all final written and audio visual reports prior to their publication to ensure consistency with discrimination laws. The Director of Communications has undergone training concerning compliance with discrimination laws and consults with the ADA Coordinator and Office of General Counsel when appropriate.



## **Compliance with ADA as an Employer**

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SANDAG employment practices are in compliance with the ADA. The following actions have been taken to meet existing, new, or expanded requirements.

### **Review of Employment Policies**

Employment policies are reviewed annually by the Office of General Counsel to ensure that SANDAG does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities.

### **Recruiting for Essential Functions of Positions**

As recruitments occur, physical or cognitive skill requirements for each position are reviewed to ensure that requirements relate to performance of essential functions of the position. The intent of this practice is to ensure unnecessary skills are not included that would limit the pool of qualified candidates with disabilities, and to give advance notice to candidates with disabilities of the job requirements to assist them in making accommodation requests if needed.

### **No Automatic Disqualifications for Medical Conditions**

With the exception of positions covered by regulation, there are no automatic disqualifications for candidates for employment based on medical conditions. Each case is considered individually and reasonable accommodation is considered.

### **Physical Agility Examinations**

Positions requiring a physical agility examination are reviewed to ensure the job relevance of all physical activities simulated in the test and prevent unnecessary restriction of the candidate pool for potential employment.

## **Reasonable Accommodation During Recruitment**

Reasonable accommodations are available upon request for use in the selection/hiring process. Candidates are informed of their right to request accommodation in the SANDAG job announcements, which state: "Applicants requiring an accommodation due to a disability should state their needs in writing when submitting an application." SANDAG makes job announcements available, upon request, in alternate formats, such as large print and Braille. In addition, the SANDAG TTY number is included on all position announcements.

## **Training for Interview Panels**

All persons who participate on interview panels are given training that includes a discussion about non-discriminatory conduct during candidate interviews.

## **Outreach Efforts**

Recruitment outreach efforts include direct mailings, email messages, and social media to organizations servicing persons with disabilities and posting on websites dedicated to minority individuals.

## **Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Procedure**

SANDAG includes a reasonable accommodation policy and procedure in its Employee Handbook. This handbook is reviewed and updated annually.

## **ADA Sensitivity Training for Employees**

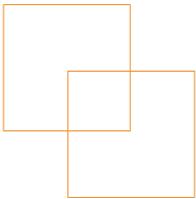
SANDAG conducts ADA sensitivity training every two years for all appropriate employees, including supervisors and managers. The training for supervisors and managers includes additional information on ADA compliance in the areas of recruitment, selection, and hiring of employees.

## **New Employee Orientation**

New employee orientation for appropriate staff includes a section that covers SANDAG policies concerning the ADA.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity and Fair Employment Practices**

SANDAG ensures equal employment opportunity and fair employment practices to all persons regardless of race, color, gender, religion (including religious dress and grooming practices), national origin, age, marital status, veteran/military status, ancestry, medical condition (AIDS/HIV, history of cancer), breast-feeding (or medical conditions relating to breast-feeding), mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or genetic information. The SANDAG Equal Employment Opportunity statement "SANDAG is an Equal Employment Employer" will continue to be included on job announcements and applications for employment.



## Complaint Procedures

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One of the agency's responsibilities under Title II is to designate a person to be responsible for coordinating the implementation of ADA requirements and for investigating complaints of alleged noncompliance. At the time of approval of this Access Plan, that person is the Director of Administration, whose office is located at 401 B Street, Suite 800, San Diego, California 92101.

SANDAG also is required to establish a grievance policy for the filing and investigation of grievances involving allegations of noncompliance with the ADA provisions. A grievance and investigation process for claims concerning the ADA applicable to SANDAG staff members is incorporated in a policy in the SANDAG Employee Handbook titled "Discrimination and Harassment Prevention." SANDAG also has adopted an ADA grievance policy applicable to SANDAG visitors and other persons who are not on SANDAG staff, which is contained in SANDAG Board Policy No. 009, titled "Discrimination Complaint Procedures."

