



# Michigan Department of Natural Resources Strategic Plan For Accessibility July 2016

## **The Department's Mission Statement**

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (Department) is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.

## **Historical Summary**

Since the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 and the subsequent program self-evaluation and facilities transition plan that was developed by the Department in 1992, the topic of accessibility has been proactively and holistically addressed. An internal Accessibility Team was created in the late 1990s in order to provide broad representation across divisions as well as a venue to discuss programs, new construction or alterations, legislation and policies and procedures. In 2007, the Accessibility Advisory Council (AAC), an external body, was formed with a purpose to expand accessibility across all natural and cultural resources by providing guidance to the Department and outreach to the public.

The concept of a Strategic Plan (herein thereafter referred to as "Plan") originated within the Accessibility Team in 2002.. With the revisions of the ADA regulations and standards in 2010, which became requirements for new construction and alterations in 2012, the Department again refocused on the completion of this Plan. Through 2016, the Plan was updated, revised and finalized through the Accessibility Team (A Team) and in conjunction with the AAC.

## **Strategic Plan**

Through this Plan, the Department commits to offering a comprehensive and consistent approach to inclusiveness so opportunities are inherently accessible to people of all abilities. In addition, the Department is committed that its employees, contractors, vendors and all others doing work on behalf of the Department understand their role in achieving compliance while serving the public.

**Goal 1: Decisions affecting Departmental programs, facilities and services are inclusive and will ensure compliance with the accessibility guidelines and standards of the ADA.**

**Objective A:** The Department will educate and increase the awareness of employees and the public about the rights, needs and desires of persons with disabilities.

### **Strategies:**

- 1) Develop and provide training that is pertinent to staff job responsibilities
  - a) Identify training needs within each division



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- b) Assess current training opportunities
  - c) Arrange training sessions
  - d) Track training accomplishments within each Division
  - e) Continue training sessions on a regular schedule
- 2) Disseminate applicable information to employees
- a) Assess available information and resources
  - b) Determine the applicability of the information to the employees
  - c) Develop information resources for staff
  - d) Update Department accessibility procedures
  - e) Prepare Department response to proposed changes of standards, coordinating the response through the State of Michigan's ADA Coordinator

**Objective B:** The Department will maintain a collaborative resource network and relationship to the State ADA Coordinator, disability advocacy organizations and public user groups.

**Strategies:**

- 1) Prepare and provide an overview of the members, roles and responsibilities of the Department's A Team and the AAC
  - a) Ensure that representation is broad and consistent
  - b) Create tangible work groups or subcommittees
  - c) Establish Chairperson roles
- 2) Provide guidance and consultation regarding
  - a) Accessibility reference materials and resources
  - b) Technical resources for development projects
  - c) Department policies and procedures
  - d) Interpretation of the standards and guidelines
  - e) Frequently asked questions
- 3) Assist the Department's outreach efforts
  - a) Establish and maintain points of contact with disability resources, including the State of Michigan ADA Coordinator; the Great Lakes Disability and Technical Assistance Center, (GLDBTAC), the National Center on Accessibility (NCA), the U. S. Access Board, the U. S. Department of Justice (DOJ).
  - b) Establish and maintain points of contact with a variety of disability, accessibility, and recreation organizations that can serve as additional resources as well as providing a conduit for distributing information about the Department's accessibility efforts, opportunities and achievements.

**Goal 2: The Department will inventory and assess its facilities, programs, services, policies and procedures for accessibility.**



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**Objective A:** Maintain an inventory and evaluate all of the Department's facilities, programs and services for compliance with accessibility guidelines and standards of the ADA.

**Strategies:**

- 1) Define Department programs and services
- 2) Identify all existing and proposed facilities, programs and services
- 3) Develop a comprehensive accessibility compliance check list for all Departmental facilities, programs and services
- 4) Conduct an assessment of facilities, programs and services
- 5) Analyze and summarize the compliance status of each facility, program and service
- 6) Regularly review and update the compliance status of all facilities, programs and services

**Objective B:** Prioritize, implement and monitor Department deficient facilities, programs and services that require action to become compliant into an updated Self Evaluation and Transition Plan.

**Strategies:**

- 1) Address and incorporate accessibility issues early on in the planning/visioning aspects of all new construction projects and program development
- 2) Each division's Accessibility Team representative will coordinate the review of their compliance status and provide a priority list for action, including a suggested schedule of implementation to improve each facility, program and service identified to be deficient
- 3) Compile the division's prioritized lists into a Department prioritized list, considering:
  - a) Target dates for completion
  - b) Percentage of each type of facility or program/service to be updated
  - c) The geographic distribution of types of facilities that are to be updated
- 4) Provide the Department's prioritized list to the AAC for review and comments
- 5) Present the updated Self Evaluation and Transition Plan with priorities to Department Management Team for approval
- 6) Provide the Department compliance plan to the respective division for implementation
- 7) Communicate the compliance plan through the Department's internet site
- 8) Develop and provide annual progress reports of accessibility activity within the Department to the Department Management Team, the Natural Resources Commission, the AAC and the State of Michigan ADA Coordinator

**Goal 3: Staff and resources shall be available to implement The Plan.**

**Objective A:** Identify and secure operational costs, staffing and funding for:

- 1) Inventory and training



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- 2) Database development and management
- 3) Updating facilities, programs and services
- 4) Materials and outreach
- 5) Maintaining the A Team and the AAC

**Strategies:**

- 1) The Department, in collaboration with the AAC, identifies additional funding needs for facility upgrades and supporting programs and services
- 2) Each division / office identifies the costs associated with updating the facilities and programs under their management responsibility
- 3) The Department, in collaboration with the AAC, pursues grants and other funding resources
- 4) The Department, in collaboration with the AAC, pursues partnerships such as local, state and federal units of government, private organizations and non-profit entities
- 5) Establish annual Department or division funds with the specific intent to improve and upgrade existing identified facilities, programs, and/or services for accessibility

**Goal 4: Effectively convey information regarding all department facilities, programs, services, policies and procedures to the public via a wide array of distribution channels, using a variety of communication methods and alternative formats.**

**Objective A:** Maximize effectiveness of current communication methods.

**Action items:**

- 1) Review, evaluate and improve Department materials, web-based information, video, press releases and social media to ensure accessibility including alternative formats
- 2) Coordinate information, messaging and materials through the Marketing and Outreach Division
- 3) Solicit and respond to public suggestions, comments and recommendations to improve our facilities, programs, and services
- 4) Ensure that the legal requirements and compliancy processes are posted at Department facilities and on the Department's public web site. Public complaints shall be responded to appropriately in a timely manner.

**Objective B:** Develop additional means to communicate news of Department's accessible facilities, programs, and services.

**Strategies:**

- 1) Utilize a variety of media resources to expand public outreach
- 2) Showcase Department accessible facilities, programs and services through special events



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- 3) Maintain Department intranet and internet to:
  - a) Communicate accessibility successes and initiatives to employees and the public
  - b) Continue to provide the search engine feature to highlight accessible elements
- 4) Submit Department completed projects, programs or services to media, organizations, and/or publications for recognition and exposure

**Goal 5: Evaluate the Department's performance in implementing this Plan.**

**Objective A:** Develop and implement a process to review and update this Plan.

**Strategies:**

- 1) Every three years, evaluate progress and modify this Plan as needed
- 2) Provide progress reports to the Department Management Team, the Natural Resources Commission, the AAC and the State of Michigan ADA Coordinator