

APPROVED MINUTES
Advisory Board on the Americans with Disabilities Act

Thursday, November 29, 2012
231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut

Members present: Ms. Sandra Lugo Gines, Atty. Stephen N. Ment, Atty. Cindy Theran, Atty. Mark Ciarciello, Ms. Mary Sitaro, Atty. Tom Smith, and Atty. Pamela Meotti. Absent: The Hon. Patrick L. Carroll III, Chair.
Also present: Mary-K Sullivan, Clinical Psychologist and presenter. Also, Legal Service Advisor Atty. Maureen Finn and support staff member Ms. Heather Collins.

- I. Welcome: The meeting began at 2:00 p.m. and Ms. Lugo-Gines advised the Board that the Chair, Judge Patrick L. Carroll III, was unable to attend today's meeting and that he asked that the Board proceed with the meeting in his absence. Ms. Lugo-Gines then introduced two new Board members: Atty. Pamela Meotti, Chief Administrative Officer of the Supreme and Appellate courts, and Atty. Thomas Smith Jr., Reporter of Judicial Decisions. Atty. Meotti processes ADA grievances at the appellate level, while Atty. Smith is the appellate-level Contact person who works to fill ADA requests. The Board also welcomed Ms. Sullivan.
- II. Minutes: The minutes of the May 3d, 2012 meeting were approved by Ms. Lugo-Gines, Atty. Ment, Atty. Ciarciello, Atty. Theran and Ms. Sitaro. The new members abstained from voting.
- III. ADA New Training Module: Ms. Lugo-Gines introduced Ms. Sullivan, a licensed psychologist who works at the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services contracted by the Court Support Services Division to provide training. She has been working for several months with Ms. Lugo-Gines on developing a training module for Branch staff on hidden disabilities. She provided to the Board a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, "*Successful Interactions with People with Hidden Disabilities.*" Training is scheduled to begin in January 2013. This new module will complement the various trainings already provided to staff.
- IV. Updates from the members on previously assigned tasks:
 - Equipment Inventory: Atty. Ciarciello advised that he has completed assessments in offices in various judicial districts on the availability of auxiliary aids, including pocket talkers, FM kits and magnifying glasses. There was discussion about how these items are distributed and it was determined that there is no set number of auxiliary aids distributed in the districts, but there may need to be. Ms. Lugo-Gines advised that some items are used quite frequently, while others less so, and that most aids can be

shared inter-district if needed. Atty. Ciarciello said that he will complete the inventory prior to the next Board meeting in late winter. Ms. Lugo-Gines is going to determine the number of pocket talkers, which amplify sound for people with hearing impairment.

- Types of ADA requests (Administrative Services Division and Court Support Services Division): Atty. Ciarciello, of the Admin. Division, reported that so far this year there have been sixteen grievances filed by members of the public whose ADA requests were denied, and 24 ADA accommodation requests from Branch staff. There was discussion about the types of requests made and granted, including allowing employees with disabilities to adjust work schedules. Next, Atty. Theran, of CSSD, reported that in the first six months of 2012, some 36 ADA requests were handled.
- Update on *Hearing Voices* training: Atty. Ciarciello reported that since the last Board meeting, he completed the “Hearing Voices” training provided by the Judicial Marshal Academy. Attys. Meotti and Smith said they too would like to take the training, in which participants learn hands-on what it feels like to hear voices (using earphones and recorded voices) while trying to conduct a daily routine. The training has been very well received by staff.
- ADA Newsletter and attorney information: Ms. Collins in June began sending an E-newsletter to Contact people, with information on trends, news stories on the Act, training information and general ADA tips, and the feedback from the Contacts has been positive. The latest update will be sent following today’s meeting. Also, Ms. Collins is a member of the Access to Justice Commission and its Subcommittee on the ABA and Technology & Access to Justice, and reported that it is tentatively going to develop, for the Commission’s consideration and review, a quick-card type of information that would give to attorneys a condensed version of how to make an ADA request either for themselves or their clients.
- ADA Websites: Ms. Sitaro reports that the Information Technology Division’s re-designs of the Branch’s ADA website is nearly complete and will provide users to more easily find information on requests for accommodation, who to call, etc.
- Outreach events: Atty. Ment reported that he, Ms. Lugo-Gines and Ms. Collins appeared on the Connecticut Radio Information System ([CRIS Radio](#)) show “Focal Point”, with host Stephen Thal, to discuss the Branch’s efforts to provide ADA information and accommodations to the public, including parties to cases, members of the bar, jurors, victims, and witnesses. CRIS Radio is a non-profit organization known as “Connecticut’s Talking Newsstand for the Blind and Print-Handicapped.” Also, Ms. Lugo-Gines and Ms. Collins are attending a conference of ADA

coordinators and contacts at the Legislative Office Building on December 3d. The half-day forum is sponsored by the state Department of Administrative Services and Commissioner Donald Defronzo.

- Accessible parking for staff: The members discussed parking for Branch staff with disabilities, which can be an issue in areas with limited parking.

- V. Updates on other tasks: Atty. Ment told the Board that he was selected to Chair the Branch's Access to Facilities Implementation Committee, which is tasked with prioritizing and implementing, to the extent that is feasible, the report released this summer by the Access to Facilities Committee. That Committee conducted on-site assessments of signage and accessibility at dozens of Branch sites and made some 16 recommendations. Atty. Ment told the Board that the Implementation Committee is developing uniform language for signs that will be posted at facility entrances announcing Branch policies with respect to entry, weapons, and safety. The new sign will also include language that will direct court users on how to locate an ADA Contact person. There was also discussion on providing Quick Cards to all Branch staff, including Judicial Marshals, that would provide basic ADA information as well as information on local contact people. Additionally, Atty. Smith suggested that something may be included on what accommodations may be granted, as an example, and others that cannot be granted, such as personal services. Atty. Finn said she can assist in articulating the language. Finally, it was noted that the official Request for Accommodation and the Grievance/Complaint forms are being revised.
- VI. Future meetings: Because Judge Carroll was not in attendance, the Board did not plan a date for the next meeting. However, it will be announced and posted on [the Branch's website](#) and the [Board's webpage](#). The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.