

Minutes
The Connecticut Judicial Branch
Advisory Board On The Americans with Disabilities Act

Tuesday, June 18, 2013
Attorney Conference Room
231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT
10:00 AM

In attendance: Judge Patrick L. Carroll, Chair; members: Atty. Stephen Ment, Atty. Mark Ciarciello, Atty. Pamela Meotti, Atty. Tom Smith, Ms. Mary Sitaro, Ms. Sandra Lugo-Gines, Atty. Deirdre McPadden, Atty. Eileen Condron, Ms. Christine Elkins. Member absent: Atty. Cindy Theran.

Also present: Atty. Maureen Finn, legal advisor to the Advisory Board, and Ms. Heather Collins, support staff to the Board.

- I. Welcome and Introduction of New Members by Judge Carroll: Attorney Deirdre McPadden, Director of Judge Support Services, and ADA Local Contacts, Attorney Eileen Condron of Stamford and Ms. Christine Elkins of Meriden: Judge Carroll called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed the new members.
- II. Approval of minutes of February 7, 2013 meeting: The Minutes were approved by unanimous vote of the members in attendance at the February meeting: The Hon. Patrick L. Carroll III, Chair; Atty. Mark Ciarciello, Ms. Sandra Lugo Gines, Atty. Stephen N. Ment, Atty. Pamela Meotti, Ms. Mary Sitaro, Atty. Thomas Smith.
- III. Discussion of Draft Report to the Chief Justice: The Board reviewed a draft of its first report to Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers. Note that new members Atty. Condron, Atty. McPadden, and Ms. Elkins did not vote on the recommendations, which were developed prior to their appointments to the Board. The other members voted on the following recommendations to be included in the report, which will be presented upon its completion to the Chief Justice and published on the [ADA homepage](#) and on the [Advisory Board's homepage](#):
 - 1) Judicial Branch website design: The Branch should identify its most visited ADA-related Webpages and determine the feasibility of converting those pages into ADA accessible pages. The pages should be prioritized by highest use. The Branch should also consider the feasibility of converting its other most-used pages using accessibility guidelines. Motion to approve made by Atty. Ment, seconded by Atty. Ciarciello; motion carried unanimously.
 - 2) Online Information: The Branch should add a resources link, such as that found on the Law Libraries' "Resources" page, that provides court users with information on external resources for people with disabilities. *Motion to approve made by Atty. Meotti, seconded by Atty. Ciarciello; motion carried unanimously.*

3) Signage: Make facilities signage readable by, and relevant to, a variety of people with different abilities, whenever possible. This could include small way-finding signs and information on how to request an on-site auxiliary aid. *Motion to approve made by Atty. Ment, seconded by Judge Carroll; motion carried unanimously.*

4) Training: The Branch should continue to identify training opportunities for all Branch staff on the Act and its applicability to access to programs and processes. *Motion to approve made by Ms. Lugo-Gines, seconded by Atty. Meotti; motion carried unanimously.*

5) The Branch should consider utilizing audio-delivered information and posting that information online. For example, audio recording the text of certain ADA brochures and publications would serve not only people with vision problems, but those with literacy issues. *Motion to approve made by Atty. Ment, seconded by Atty. Meotti; motion carried unanimously.*

6) ADA Notice: Committees, Boards, and Workgroups, whose meetings are open to the public, should consider posting the Branch's ADA Request for Accommodation on their individual Websites. This would increase access to open meetings for people with disabilities who need a reasonable accommodation. *Motion to approve made by Ms. Lugo-Gines, seconded by Ms. Meotti; motion carried unanimously.*

7) ADA Notice on Branch forms: While the ADA Notice is added to forms as they come up for revision, reprinting, or are newly developed, the Branch should identify **online** forms or other publications, based on frequency of use, lacking the Notice but which could be modified in the online form to include the Notice. *Motion to approve made by Atty. Ment, seconded by Atty. Ciarciello; motion carried unanimously.*

8) The Branch should continue to utilize plain language principles in brochures, booklets and other public information. *Motion to approve made by Atty. Ment, seconded by Judge Carroll; motion carried unanimously.*

9) The Branch should consider translating into languages other than English information on the ADA, as well as publications detailing accommodation and grievance processes. The information should also be posted on the Branch's Spanish information Webpages. *Motion to approve made by Atty. Meotti, seconded by Atty. Ment; motion carried unanimously.*

10) The Branch should seek opportunities for grant funding for projects or programs that would benefit people with differing abilities. *Motion to approve made by Ms. Lugo-Gines, seconded by Atty. Ment; motion carried unanimously.*

11) ADA Notice soliciting comments from the public on ADA issues: The Board's Notice seeking suggestions from the public on how the Branch can continue its compliance with the Act drew several comments from the public. In order for the Board and the Branch to continue engaging the public, the Branch should consider the feasibility of posting on the ADA homepage a platform to allow the public to offer **non-case related suggestions** on how to improve ADA services. The language should be clear and unambiguous that such a form or electronic forum is subject to Freedom of Information disclosure requests; that comments on litigation will not be considered; and that the form or forum is not a grievance site. The Board recommends that such an undertaking should be coordinated with Legal Services, which may want to consider the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services Vehicle Feedback Form (<http://fleet.ct.gov/fleetpublic/FleetComments.aspx>) for style purposes. *Motion to approve made by Atty. Ment, seconded by Ms. Lugo-Gines; motion carried unanimously.*

12) Outreach: The Board should continue its outreach to Judicial Branch Judges and staff on the services offered by the Judicial Branch to accommodate people with disabilities. The Branch may also want to revisit the ADA art display from 2010 and considering the feasibility of establishing a rotating exhibit of artists by disabilities in public areas within our facilities. *Motion to approve made by Ms. Lugo-Gines, seconded by Atty. Meotti; motion carried unanimously.*

- IV. Updates from members on status of wheelchair policy revision: *There was no action taken on this discussion.*
- V. Parking: Update on accessible parking availability: Atty. Ciarcello said that accessible parking for employees is handled on a case-by-case basis, and that there have been few complaints. *No action taken.*
- VI. Communications, including discussion of requesting translation into Spanish of certain ADA publications/forms: The Judicial Branch offers many of its publications in languages other than English. The members previously approved Recommendation No. 9 of the Draft report. *No action taken.*
- VII. Update on training: Atty. McPadden told the Board that the Branch has applied for a grant from the State Justice Institute to provide additional training for staff. The SJI Board meets later in June and the Branch should have an answer on the request. *No action taken.*
- VIII. Schedule of next meeting: The Board will meet in September 2013. The date, time and location will be published online.
- IX. Adjourn: At 11:15 a.m., hearing no other business, *a motion to adjourn was made by Atty. Meotti, seconded by Ms. Lugo-Gines, and unanimously approved.*