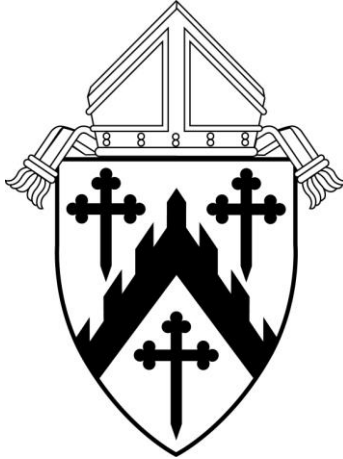


DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT



Resource: Parish Accessibility Survey

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Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

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Bishop of Davenport

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§V-3100 RESOURCE: ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY

Introduction

In 1978 the U.S. Catholic Bishops declared in their Pastoral Statement on People with Disabilities: *It is essential that all forms of the liturgy be completely accessible to people with disabilities.... To exclude members of the parish from these celebrations of the life of the Church, even by passive omission, is to deny the reality of that community.*

As a welcoming Church, called to model the hospitality of Jesus, we are charged with reducing the barriers that many parishioners and visitors encounter when they attempt to access our buildings and take part in our worship and programs. To that end, we are providing this “checklist” for parishes to use as they evaluate their physical plant and prioritize needed repairs and renovations.

This survey is quite extensive and is designed to assist parishes in their long-term planning; not everything listed in this document needs to be attended to immediately. Rather, parishes should identify their particular needs and priorities. Therefore, parishes may wish to form a committee of various parish leaders, experts in building and accessibility issues, and especially members of the parish with disabilities to work through this document and make recommendations as how best to fulfill the U.S. Bishops’ call to *do all in our power to ... reach out to welcome people with disabilities who seek to participate in the ecclesial community.*

The operative value underlying this document is “equivalent experience.” This principle calls us to help ensure—to the degree possible—that those with mobility, sensory, and developmental limitations are able to experience the life of the community in as equivalent a fashion as possible. By doing so, we signal that there are no “second class” citizens in the Kingdom.

Sources

This document is a compilation of access assessment instruments from the following organization and dioceses:

- The Archdiocese of Detroit (MI)
- The Archdiocese of Dubuque (IA)
- The Archdiocese of Washington, DC
- The Diocese of Springfield (IL)
- The National Catholic Partnership on Disability (<http://www.ncpd.org/>)

A free copy of the ADA Accessibility Standards is available at: <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/index.htm>

Not everything in this survey will apply to your parish, but our attempt here is to be as comprehensive as possible. As a result, some of the information is quite technical, including architectural recommendations from the documents listed above.

As you seek to implement this resource and questions arise, the Diocesan Liturgical and Building Commissions are available to assist you.

§V-3100.1 General Considerations / Inclusion in Parish Life

Are the parish staff, volunteers, and parishioners at large informed about issues of accessibility and welcoming of those with disabilities?

Yes	No	
		Does the parish have a stated policy that people with disabilities are welcome?
		If so, does the staff know about this commitment?
		Have the staff ever been trained in awareness / sensitivity to disability concerns?
		Have volunteers (such as ministers of hospitality [ushers, greeters]) been trained in how to appropriately assist those with disabilities?
		Do we try to reduce attitudinal barriers by providing disability awareness programs?
		Does the parish regularly advertise access to its activities and services (for example, in its invitations, publicity, information flyers, and bulletin)?
		Does the parish’s emergency evacuation plan take into account those with disabilities?
		Is there a manual wheelchair available for use if necessary?
		Are persons with disabilities consulted on accessibility questions?
		Are persons with disabilities able to participate in parish social activities, with peer helper when needed?
		In written and oral communication, including preaching, do we use appropriate language that acknowledges the person, not the disability?
		Do we provide transportation (to liturgy as well as to social and formation events) for those with disabilities (e.g., lift van, organized network of volunteers, church bus)?
		Do we provide a tour for newcomers with disabilities so that they would be aware of possible challenges / choices available to them?
		Do we provide for members in group homes or care facilities, and for people who are homebound (communion ministers, taped worship service, parish visitors, invitation to participate with support [if needed], etc.)?

What ministries do we need to undertake in order to better reach out to the homebound or residing in other facilities?

Are people with disabilities actively ministering in the parish?

People with impairment of:	Mobility	Vision	Hearing	Developmental Disability	Other
Altar Servers					
Catechists					
Committees					
EMHCs					
Greeter/Usher					
Parish Council					
Parish Staff					
RCIA					
Readers					
Service Groups					
Youth Ministry					
Other					

§V-3100.2 Auditory Access to Worship and Activities

Are the following devices available and in working condition?

Yes	No	
		Is there a proper system for sound amplification in place?
		Are ministers trained for public speaking and the proper use of the sound system?
		A visual emergency alarm system in the Church and Parish Center
		A Telephone Device for the Deaf in parish administration center and staff familiar with use

Does our parish use the following?

Yes	No	
		Assistive listening devices (Infrared, Audio Loop, FM System)
		Sign / Oral interpreters
		If interpreters are not available, does the parish provide real-time captioning?
		Is there adequate lighting on speakers (so as to accommodate lip-reading) and interpreters, with no shadows on either?
		Written text of verbal presentations (ex: homilies, announcements, catechetical presentations; possibly through e-mail ahead of time or if person unable to attend)
		Captioned audiovisual materials

Any comments regarding auditory access?

Which of the above items is something our parish should consider implementing?

§V-3100.3 Mobility Access to Church Facilities

Is the accessible parking area convenient, prominently identified, and easily used by people with mobility impairments?

Yes	No	
		Is the accessible parking area clearly identified?
		Are there a sufficient number of clearly marked reserved parking spaces for people with disabilities? # _____
		Are reserved spaces at least 8’ wide? If not, how wide? _____
		Are adjacent access aisles at least 5’ wide?
		Are these spaces paved, even if the rest of the lot is not?
		Are they close to an accessible entrance and on an accessible route?
		Are they on a level surface?

Are walkways easily used by people with mobility impairments?

Yes	No	
		Paved, non-slip access pathway to buildings?
		4-foot wide curb cut to sidewalk; with a slope of no more than 1:12? If not, actual width: _____ slope: _____
		Are walkways at least 3’ wide? (ideally 4’)?
		Are walkways of a continuing common surface, and not interrupted by steps?
		Is the path between reserved space and accessible entrance free of obstacles? If not, describe: _____

Is at least one primary entryway to each facility accessible to people with mobility impairments (parishioners and guests who use wheelchairs, canes, crutches, walkers or are unsteady)?

Yes	No	
		Are accessible entrances clearly marked as such on both the outside and inside?
		Doors open easily or automatically
		If doors are automatic, can they be operated with a closed fist?
		If doors have a closer, is there a time-delay device?
		Are door handles no more than 48” off the floor?
		Are door handles operable with a closed fist?
		Doors are at least 32 inches wide (and ideally 36” wide) ¹ If no, actual width: _____
		Smooth transition between doorway and floor surface (less than ¼” or beveled up to ½”)
		When closed, are doors that are in a series separated by at least 4’ plus the width of any door swinging onto the space? If not, actual distance: _____
		Do inaccessible entrances have signs indicating where the nearest accessible entrance is located?

¹ When specifying door sizes you have to reduce the width by 2-3" from door size to compensate for the door and hinges. This means that a 32" door would give you an opening that is 29-30" wide, just barely enough for a wheelchair to pass. Therefore, a 36" doors is the minimum size recommended. The other issue is having enough space at the latch side to allow a person approach in a wheelchair and open the door. There are many variables in terms of direction of travel and other obstructions, but for a general rule of thumb you need 18" more space measured from latch side for pull/in-swing situations and 12" additional space for push/out-swing situations.

If the building is multi-story (# _____) or has changes in grade, is use made of any of the following?

Yes	No	
		Ramp
		Lift device
		Elevator

For ramps:

Yes	No	
		Ramp has hand rails on both sides
		The rails are 30”-34” above the surface of the ramp
		The rails extend 1’ beyond the top and bottom of the ramp
		Ramp has non-slip surface
		Ramp has a slope of no greater than 1:12 ²
		Ramp has a width of no less than 36”
		Ramp has at least a 5’ clearance (landing) at the top and bottom. If not, actual dimension: _____
		Ramp has level platforms at 30’ intervals and whenever they turn (for rest and safety)

For wheelchair lifts:

Yes	No	
		Lift device has a platform that measures at least 42” x 48” If not, actual dimensions: _____
		Are directions posted for operating the device?
		Lift device can be operated by persons with disabilities without assistance
		Is the lift device secured to prevent accidents or misuse?

For elevators:

Yes	No	
		Does the door have a clear opening at least 36" wide? If no, actual width: _____
		Are the call buttons 42" from floor?
		Are all of the controls 48" or less from floor? If no, actual height: _____
		Are the buttons labeled with raised or braille letters beside them?
		Is the cab at least 68" x 51"? If no, actual dimension: _____
		Is there a handrail provided on at least one side, 32” from the floor?
		When the elevator stops, is it self-leveling (1/2” maximum)?
		Is the door slow closing, with a sensing device?
		Is there an audible signal at each floor?

² Most codes will allow you to use a 1/20 slope without any railing being installed. This means for 20 feet in length the floor will go up or down exactly 1 foot. A 1/24 slope is preferred unless there is a very tight situation. Width is very subjective. The minimum widths of 3 feet may feel too narrow for people depending upon how it is organized. There are also egress width requirements that dictate required widths. The minimum aisle width is 3'-8" for example.

Are stairs accessible and safe to use?

Yes	No	
		Do steps/stairs have continuous hand rails on both sides? If not, at least on one side? _____
		Do stairs have a non-slip surface?
		Is there textural or color changes at the top and bottom of steps to alert persons who are visually impaired?
		Are steps well-lit?

Are floors and corridors accessible and safe to use?

Yes	No	
		Do floors have a non-slip surface?
		Are corridors in each floor at a common level or connected by a ramp?
		Where carpeting is used, is it a tight weave and low pile, preferably free of padding?
		Are corridors free of jutting signs, light fixtures, coat hooks, and loose clutter that can trip or injure a person?
		Are corridors well-lit?
		Is there a 5’ circle or a T-shaped space for a person using a wheelchair to reverse directions?

In regards to seating in the nave:

Yes	No	
		Are there at least one or two pews 32" apart for use by people who use crutches or walkers?
		Have several pews been shortened (preferably in various locations) enabling people in wheelchairs to sit with family/friends?
		Are there padded seats for some pews, or seat pads to distribute?
		Is there seating available for those who are unable to use the standard pews or chairs in the nave (for example, those who might be too large to sit comfortably in a standard chair or someone who has had a stroke and cannot negotiate sitting in a pew)?

Are these areas accessible to people with mobility impairment?

Yes	No	
		Sanctuary (that is, is there a clear path to altar and ambo?)
		Confessionals / Reconciliation Chapel
		Chapel of Reservation / Tabernacle
		Choir area
		Parish Center
		Parish Administration Building
		Restrooms (at least one on each floor)
		Water fountains (at least one on each floor)
		Telephones
		Emergency Exits (ex: fire exits, exits to basement or other safe place in the event of a tornado)

In regards to restrooms:

Yes	No	
		Do entranceways, doors, and vision screens allow at least 32” clearance?
		Are sinks wall-mounted with rim no higher than 34” from floor?
		Do sinks have faucets operable with a closed fist? (single-lever type handles not requiring hand grip are preferred)
		Are exposed drain pipes and hot water pipes covered or insulated?
		Are some mirrors and shelves at a height with the bottom no higher than 40” above the floor (or slanted to allow vision at that level)?
		Are some towel racks, and other dispensers and disposal units, mounted no higher than 40” from the floor?
		Do restrooms for men have wall-mounted urinals with the opening of the basin no more than 17” from the floor, or have floor-mounted urinals that are level with the main floor?
		If urinal is in a stall, is the stall at least 36” wide? If not, actual width: _____
		<p>Is there at least one toilet stall that meets the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 48” clear depth from door closing to front of commode • A door that is 36” wide and swings out • Grab bars 36” long on each side and rear wall, 33”-36” above floor, fastened securely to the wall at the ends and center • Commode with seat 17”-19” from floor • Flush control no more than 44” above floor

Any comments regarding mobility access?

Which of the above items is something our parish should consider implementing?

§V-3100.4 Visual Access to Worship and Activities

Which of the following does our parish use to make worship and activities accessible to people with visual impairment?

Yes	No	
		Large print material (Worship aids, Hymnals, Bulletins, Newsletters)
		Are signs easy to read (large print, contrast, etc.)?
		Braille material (including signs for rooms, especially restrooms)
		Audio cassette/CD/mp3 material
		Audio description

Are the following areas well lighted?

Yes	No	
		Parking area
		Approach and entryways to buildings
		Body of Church
		Sanctuary
		Parish Center / Offices

Are the facilities accessible to persons with visual impairments?

Yes	No	
		Are areas free of hazardous over-hangs and protruding objects, or at least all obstacles cane-detectable (located within 27” of the floor and protruding less than 4” from the wall)?
		Are abrupt changes in level clearly marked? ³

Any comments regarding visual access?

Which of the above items is something our parish should consider implementing?

³ A change in floor texture/material can be a benefit. The person knows something is different or special for the location. The big issue for flooring and the visual impaired is not to have abrupt dimensional changes in floor surfaces. Try to keep the floors as level in transition as possible. This can be a problem for example with a change from bare concrete to ceramic tile. This can be a ½" step up that can cause tripping. Recessing the tile helps to minimize this situation.

§V-3100.5 Other Access Issues / Health Concerns

Has there been a survey or is there a place on the parish registration form to ascertain if any parishioners have allergies or chemical sensitivities to such things as the wheat host, incense, paint, perfume, cleaning fluids, etc.?

Yes	No	
		Is the parish leadership aware of the proper liturgical provisions for those with sensitivity to gluten or alcohol, as specified in diocesan policy?
		Are provisions made for those with sensitivity to incense (for example, using hypoallergenic incense, announcing ahead of time at which liturgies incense will be used)?
		Have accommodations been made to enable persons with other sensitivities to participate in worship?

Any comments regarding other issues?

Which of the above items is something our parish should consider implementing?

APPENDIX 1: Barrier Worksheet (from the Archdiocese of Detroit)

Date: _____

Make one sheet for each barrier.

Describe barrier:

Possible Solutions

Estimated Cost

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

**APPENDIX 2: Recommendations for Pew Cuts in Churches
(From the Diocese of Springfield, IL; modified)**

There are no specific guidelines on the removal for accessibility to wheelchairs because distances between pews as well as overall seating arrangements vary from church to church. However, the following principals/recommendations should be kept in mind:

1. Consult with persons with disabilities in the parish to determine what their preference is regarding the location of pew cuts.
2. Make pew cuts in several different areas of the church, allowing those with disabilities to choose their preferred location (e.g., front, center, back rows).
3. It is not recommended that entire rows be removed for this purpose. Such an approach makes persons in wheelchairs conspicuous, creates an obvious segregation from the rest of the community, isolates the person from his or her family, and is contrary to the principal of “equivalent experience.”
4. In order to allow for enough room for a wheelchair, remove 36”-48” from each designated pew.
5. Depending on the distance between pews, it will often be necessary to remove the ends of two adjacent pews in order to allow a person in a wheelchair sufficient room to move and turn freely.
6. If the floor slants to the front, place pew cuts in the most level areas.