

30-day external review draft. Submit comments by **Thursday, January 9, 2025**, via the [Comment Form](#). The draft Order and comment form are available at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/policy/new.htm>.

## **DIRECTOR’S ORDER #42: ACCESSIBILITY OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE FACILITIES, PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND ACTIVITIES**

**Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Director

**Effective Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Duration:** Until amended, superseded, or rescinded

This Director’s Order (Order) supersedes and replaces Director’s Order #42: Accessibility for Park Visitors, dated November 3, 2000. Together with Reference Manual 42 (RM-42), it supersedes and replaces any other conflicting guidance. This Order supplements policy guidance on accessibility for people with disabilities found in multiple sections of [NPS Management Policies \(2006\)](#).

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## **1. Background and Purpose**

### **1.1. Background**

Every year, millions of people visit America’s national parks<sup>1</sup>, participate in National Park Service (NPS) programs, and use NPS digital content such as apps, websites, and social media. The NPS estimates that between 10 and 20 percent of its visitors have a disability.<sup>2</sup> And even more visitors have physical, cognitive, and sensory limitations that do not meet the legal definition of disability but that nonetheless could affect their experiences. Thus, millions of people are unable to experience the full breadth and depth of the NPS’s recreational opportunities, facilities, programs, activities, and services (visitor use opportunities) when they are not accessible.

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<sup>1</sup> Annual visitation statistics are available at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/index.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> This is a conservative figure based on U.S. Census Bureau and World Health Organization population estimates: over 40 million (13%) of the U.S. civilian, noninstitutionalized population and more than one billion (15%) of the world’s population live with some form of disability.

While there are legal, business, and ethical reasons for providing visitor experiences that are usable by everyone, more importantly, ensuring equitable access is the right thing to do. Equitable access is not just a civil right enshrined in Federal laws, regulations, and standards, it is implicit in the NPS mission that all visitors be afforded equitable access to the natural and cultural resources and values we manage for their enjoyment, education, and inspiration.

The NPS also recognizes the need to consult with accessibility experts and representatives of the disability community to achieve its accessibility goals and objectives. Inaccessible facilities, programs, services, and activities put people with disabilities at risk and expose the NPS to complaints and lawsuits because accessibility is a life, health, and safety issue for people with disabilities. Further, a lack of accessible facilities, programs, services, and activities could result in billions of dollars in lost revenue to parks, partners, concessioners, and gateway communities.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, the NPS takes a proactive, accountable approach to accessibility that engages managers, employees, volunteers, concessioners, partners, and accessibility experts in the planning, development, operation, and maintenance of facilities, programs, services, and activities. By prioritizing accessibility and applying the Seven Principles of Universal Design to all visitor experiences, the NPS will sustain its relevance and be a model of inclusion for people with disabilities.

## 1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this Order is to provide more detailed interpretations of *Management Policies* related to accessibility for people with disabilities. It sets forth the operational policies and procedures and organizational capacity necessary for accessible and non-discriminatory:

- facilities
- transportation systems
- information and communication technology
- interpretive and educational programs and services
- museum collections and archives
- commercial visitor services

This Order applies to programs and activities conducted by the NPS and by organizations acting on behalf of the NPS, consistent with [43 CFR part 17](#).

For information about requirements related to reasonable accommodations for volunteers and employees see [Director's Order #16A: Reasonable Accommodation for Applicants and Employees with Disabilities](#) and [Director's Order #7: Volunteers-in-Parks](#).

RM-42 contains comprehensive requirements, procedures, and practices to carry out this Order.

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<sup>3</sup> Visitor spending contributes billions of dollars to the national economy annually. Refer to the NPS's annual reports on the effects of visitor spending at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/index.htm>.

## 2. Authority to Issue this Director's Order

Authority to issue this Order is contained in the National Park Service Organic Act and other NPS laws ([54 USC 100101](#) *et seq.*), and the delegations of authority contained in [Part 245](#) of the Department of the Interior (DOI) Manual.

This Order is intended only to improve the internal management of the NPS and is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

## 3. Applicable Laws, Regulations, and Standards

This section summarizes key Federal laws, regulations, policies, and standards on accessibility.

### 3.1 Accessibility Laws

- **Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA)** ([42 USC 4151](#) *et seq.*) requires buildings or facilities designed, built, or altered with Federal funds, or leased by Federal agencies, be accessible to people with disabilities.
  - [Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards](#) contain design standards and technical requirements for accessibility to sites, facilities, buildings, and elements, and environments by people with disabilities. It includes provisions for outdoor developed areas (for example, trails, picnic and camping facilities, viewing areas, beach access routes, boating facilities, fishing piers and platforms, golf courses, and play areas).
- **Rehabilitation Act of 1973** ([29 USC 701](#) *et seq.*), prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in Federal employment and federally conducted programs and activities and programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance.<sup>4</sup> Sections of the Rehabilitation Act include:
  - [Section 504](#), which requires access to federally conducted programs and activities and programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance.
  - [Section 508](#), which requires Federal agencies to make their electronic and information and communications technology accessible to people with disabilities.
  - [Information and Communication Technology Standards](#), which provide technical standards for implementing section 508. DOI policy on section 508 ([375 DM 8](#)) provides guidance for DOI bureaus, including the NPS.
- **Great American Outdoors Act** ([Public Law 116-152](#)) establishes the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Fund. Funded projects must incorporate measures to improve accessibility and accommodate visitors and employees with disabilities.

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<sup>4</sup> Although title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) ([42 USC 12101](#) *et seq.*) does not apply to Federal agencies, section 504 and title II are interpreted consistently. Thus, given the parity between section 504 and title II of the ADA, this document sometimes refers to the requirements of title II.

### 3.2 Accessibility Regulations

- [36 CFR 1.2\(e\)](#)—NPS regulations treat people with mobility disabilities, who use a manual or motorized wheelchair, as pedestrians.
- [36 CFR 2.15\(a\)\(1\)](#)—NPS regulation restricting pets, with the exemption of guide dogs accompanying visually impaired people or hearing ear dogs accompanying hearing-impaired people.
- [41 CFR part 102-76, subpart C](#)—General Services Administration regulations adopting ABA accessibility standards.
- [43 CFR part 17](#)—DOI regulations for implementing section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. [Subpart B](#) applies to programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from DOI. [Subpart E](#) applies to programs and activities conducted, administered, or maintained by the DOI, its bureaus, and offices.

## 4. Definitions

**Accessible and accessibility**—visitors with disabilities can reach, use, understand, or appreciate programs, facilities, and services, and enjoy the same benefits that are available to people without disabilities.

**Auxiliary Aids and Services**—means devices or services that enable people with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills to have an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, NPS programs and activities. Auxiliary aids useful for people with impaired vision include readers, Brailled materials, large-print materials, audio recordings, and other similar services and devices. Auxiliary aids useful for people with impaired hearing include telephone handset amplifiers, telephones compatible with hearing aids, telecommunication devices for deaf persons (TDDs), interpreters, notetakers, written materials, and other similar services and devices.

**Information and communication technology**—computer hardware and software, facsimile machines, copiers, telephones, other equipment used for transmitting, receiving, using, or storing information, and all forms of digital content (public and internal websites, social media, and mobile apps).

**Facilities**—all or any portion of buildings, structures, equipment, roads, walks, parking lots, outdoor recreation and program spaces, park sites, developed sites, rolling stock or other conveyances, other real or personal property, and outdoor developed areas (such as trails, picnic and camping facilities, viewing areas, beach access routes, fishing piers and platforms, golf facilities, recreational boating facilities, and play areas).

**Most Integrated Setting Possible**—a setting that enables individuals with disabilities to interact with non-disabled people to the fullest extent possible.” (See 28 CFR Part 35, Appendix B, analysis of section 35.130.)

**People with disabilities**—individuals who have physical, mental, or sensory impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities (for example, functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working); or have a record of such an impairment; or are regarded as having such an impairment.

**Practicable or Feasible**—capable of being done or put into practice. Practicable reflects not only what is possible to do, but also what is reasonable, after considering all of the consequences. Reasonable means the consequences do not result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a visitor experience or place an undue financial and administrative burden on the NPS or the DOI.

**Transportation system**—a system (including alternative transportation) that moves visitors by motorized vehicle on a regularly scheduled service. All routes and services at a park that are operated under the same business model by the same operator are considered a single NPS transit system.

**Universal Design**—the design of products and environments to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design, through application of the Seven Principles of Universal Design<sup>5</sup> (Universal Design principles):

- Equitable use
- Flexibility in use
- Simple and intuitive use
- Perceptible information
- Tolerance for error
- Low physical effort
- Size and space for approach and use

**Visitor**—anyone who uses NPS facilities, transportation systems, information and communication technology, commercial services, or interpretive and educational programs and services, regardless of where such use occurs.

## 5. Management Policies

The following sections of [Management Policies](#) establish the policy framework for accessibility of NPS facilities, programs, services, and activities provided by the NPS and organizations acting on its behalf:

- [1.9.2 Managing Information](#) (Management Excellence)
- [1.9.3 Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities](#) (Management Excellence)
- [5.3.2 Physical Access for Persons with Disabilities](#) (Historic Properties)
- [6.4.10 Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities](#) (Wilderness Experiences)
- [7.5.2 Access to Interpretive and Educational Opportunities](#) (Requirements for All Interpretive and Educational Services)
- [8.2.4 Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities](#) (Visitor Use)
- [9.1.1 Facility Planning and Design](#)
- [9.1.2 Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities](#) (Visitor and Management Facilities)
- [9.2 Transportation Systems and Alternative Transportation](#)
- [9.2.2 Trails and Walks](#) (Transportation Systems and Alternative Transportation)
- [9.3 Visitor Facilities](#)

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<sup>5</sup> A working group of architects, product designers, engineers, and environmental design researchers at the [Center for Universal Design](#) at North Carolina State University developed the Seven Principles of Universal Design in 1997.

- [10.2.6.1 Design](#) (Concession Facilities)
- [10.2.6.2 Accessibility of Commercial Services](#) (Concession Facilities)

## **6. Accessibility of Visitor Use Opportunities Provided by the NPS**

The NPS operates and maintains a large and complex range of visitor use opportunities, including facilities, transportation systems, information and communication technology, and interpretive and educational programs and services.

The NPS will design, construct, install, procure, operate, and maintain all visitor use opportunities and visitor experiences to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities in the most integrated setting possible.

The NPS will develop or adopt accessibility requirements—accessibility codes, standards, and guidelines—for all visitor use opportunities. The accessibility requirements will:

- ensure communication with people with disabilities is equally effective as communication with people without disabilities;
- apply to new visitor use opportunities as soon as they are completed and made available to visitors;
- apply to the modification, rehabilitation, or replacement of existing visitor use opportunities;
- guide the choice and use of temporary, alternative methods of access to existing visitor use opportunities until they are made accessible, in consultation with NPS and external subject matter experts and representatives of the disability community;
- ensure compliance of all deliverables from organizations acting on behalf of the NPS for the design, construction, production, installation, procurement, maintenance, operation, and implementation before acceptance; and
- include a formal process for requesting and approving exceptions, exemptions, modifications to, and waivers of building codes from the agencies that have jurisdiction over those building codes.

## **7. Accessibility of Visitor Use Opportunities Provided by Organizations Acting on Behalf of the NPS**

Many NPS federally conducted activities are delivered, administered, or maintained by government, nonprofit, and commercial organizations on behalf of the NPS. Therefore, this Order may also be applicable to:

- concessioners
- commercial use authorization (CUA) holders
- cooperating associations, outdoor schools in national parks, and other nonprofit partners
- permittees
- Federal, Tribal, State, or local government agencies
- contractors
- other entities with which the NPS has a contract or agreement

Organizations acting on behalf of the NPS must provide accessible visitor use opportunities. Therefore, the NPS will:

- require organizations, through the terms of contracts, CUAs, permits and agreements, to provide visitor use opportunities that comply with applicable accessibility requirements;
- ensure new contracts, CUAs, permits, and agreements specify the terms of compliance and how organizations will be held accountable; and
- ensure organizations have annual operating plans that specify how they will comply with and be held accountable for meeting applicable accessibility requirements.

For more information, see [Director's Order #20: Agreements](#), [Director's Order #32: Cooperating Associations](#) and [Reference Manual 32](#), and [Commercial Service Guide, National Park Service Commercial Services Program](#).

## **8. Non-Discrimination in Policies, Procedures, and Practices**

Federal law requires the NPS to make sure its policies, procedures, and practices, whether formal or informal, do not discriminate against people with disabilities. Further, the NPS must ensure employees (both those of the NPS and those of organizations acting on behalf of the NPS) do not make decisions or take actions that discriminate against people with disabilities.

### **8.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Non-Discrimination**

NPS accessibility subject matter experts will review new and existing NPS policies and procedures that may affect visitors and employees with disabilities to ensure they are nondiscriminatory. Subject matter experts will consult with the disability community as necessary and allowable.

Accessibility subject matter experts must be consulted to ensure accessibility requirements applicable to a policy subject are integrated into new and updated NPS policies and procedures. The responsible directorate or program office will (1) include an accessibility subject matter expert on the policy development work group, or (2) obtain formal and informal feedback from accessibility subject matter experts at key points in the policy development process.

### **8.2 Use of Service Animals by People with Disabilities**

Per [Policy Memorandum 18-02](#) service animals must be allowed wherever visitors are allowed when accompanying a person with a disability, unless the service animal:

- is not housebroken; or
- is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it.

A service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The NPS must make reasonable modifications to its policies, practices, and procedures to permit use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability, if the miniature horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the individual's benefit. See section 8.5 for information about service animals in wilderness areas.

RM-42 will provide more information and guidance.

### **8.3 Use of Mobility Aids and Devices by People with Disabilities**

The NPS and organizations acting on its behalf must allow people with disabilities who use manual or power wheelchairs and other mobility aids (such as walkers, crutches, canes, and braces) into all areas where members of the public are allowed to go. The term “wheelchair” is defined as a manually operated or power-driven device designed primarily for use by an individual with a mobility disability for the main purpose of indoor or of both indoor and outdoor locomotion ([28 CFR 35.104](#)). This definition does not apply to Federal wilderness areas; wheelchairs in such areas are defined in section 508(c)(2) of the ADA ([42 USC 12207\(c\)\(2\)](#)). See section 8.5 for more information about use of mobility aids and devices in wilderness areas.

The NPS and organizations acting on its behalf must also allow people with disabilities who use other power-driven mobility devices (OPDMD) into their facilities unless a particular type of device cannot be accommodated because of legitimate safety requirements. Where legitimate safety requirements bar accommodation for a particular type of device, the NPS or organizations acting on its behalf must offer the program or activity in alternate ways. The NPS and organizations acting on its behalf will follow [guidance for OPDMDs](#) issued by the Department of Justice under the ADA.

### **8.4 Provision of Auxiliary Aids and Services**

The NPS will provide proactive methods of effective communication, such as open captions and audio descriptions of videos. The NPS will also provide auxiliary aids and services to people who request them with reasonable notice in advance of their visit to a park or participation in NPS-sponsored or conducted programs, services, and activities.

Park superintendents should issue park-specific information and instructions to help visitors request auxiliary aids or services. The information should be made available on park websites and should include how much advance notice park staff need to process and respond to requests. Superintendents should also prepare standard operating procedures to guide employees in responding to these requests in a timely and consistent manner.

The NPS will be proactive in providing auxiliary aids and services at in-person and virtual programs, activities, and special events (for example, ceremonies, festivals, and public meetings) that are open to the public, even without a specific request from a prospective participant with a disability. Event announcements should include information about accessibility and the availability of auxiliary aids and services.

Organizations acting on behalf of the NPS are subject to the same requirements as the NPS for providing auxiliary aids and services. The NPS is not responsible for arranging or funding auxiliary aids and services on their behalf.

See RM-42 for detailed information and guidance about the provision of auxiliary aids and services, including what constitutes reasonable notice.

### **8.5 Access to Wilderness Areas**

The NPS is committed to providing people with disabilities opportunities for appropriate enjoyment of wilderness areas as defined in [Director’s Order #41: Wilderness Stewardship](#).



The NPS will allow service animals in wilderness when their use is required, unless the service animal presents a legitimate safety concern or would fundamentally alter the nature of the good, service, program, or activity. The training of service animals in wilderness may be allowed if it does not negatively impact wilderness character and only in areas specifically designated for pets by the park superintendent.

Wheelchairs (whether manually operated or power-driven) are allowed in wilderness if they meet the definition in Director's Order #41: "...a device designed solely for use by a mobility-impaired person for locomotion that is suitable for use in an indoor pedestrian area." The device must also be a person's primary mode of locomotion.

The NPS is not required to provide any form of special treatment or accommodation, or to construct any facilities or modify any condition of lands within a wilderness area to facilitate the use of mobility aids and devices.

See Director's Order #41, [Reference Manual 41](#), and RM-42 for more information and guidance.

## **8.6 Prevention and Correction of Discriminatory Practices or Actions**

To prevent or correct practices or actions by NPS employees and employees of organizations acting on behalf of the NPS that may discriminate against people with disabilities, the NPS will:

- take proactive measures to prevent practices, situations, and behaviors that result in discrimination against people with disabilities;
- implement an effective, efficient, and unbiased process for receiving, investigating, and resolving disability discrimination complaints;
- ensure people with disabilities are informed of their right to file discrimination complaints and are not deterred from or retaliated against for filing complaints; and
- take timely and effective corrective action when disability discrimination or a failure to follow accessibility requirements is confirmed.

## **9. Organizational Capacity for Accessibility**

The NPS must have the organizational capacity—leadership support, skilled and knowledgeable personnel (including volunteers and employees of organizations acting on behalf of the NPS), funding, and productive, collaborative relationships—to ensure accessible visitor use opportunities.

The NPS will:

- organize and maintain a National Accessibility Advisory Group to advise NPS leadership on emerging issues and the needs of parks and programs related to accessibility;
- allocate the personnel, funding, travel, supplies, equipment, and other resources necessary to meet accessibility requirements for all visitor use opportunities;
- provide learning and development opportunities to ensure employees gain and maintain the necessary competencies for achieving accessibility through application of the Universal Design principles commensurate with their duties and responsibilities;

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- develop and implement processes to hold employees accountable for compliance with accessibility requirements and the prevention of discrimination against people with disabilities;
- support formal and informal networks of subject matter experts to achieve accessibility through application of the Universal Design principles; and
- use a variety of communication methods to share information about accessibility with employees and the public on an ongoing basis.

RM-42 will provide more information and guidance on how to integrate and apply the Universal Design principles.

## **10. Roles and Responsibilities**

Expertise and accountability for ensuring access to NPS facilities, programs, services, and activities is a broad-based, multidisciplinary responsibility that is shared across every level of the organization. Specific roles and responsibilities are outlined as follows.

### **10.1 Director and Deputy Directors**

The Director and Deputy Directors will:

- provide Service-wide leadership on compliance with accessibility requirements;
- implement accountability measures to prevent and correct instances of non-compliance with accessibility requirements or disability discrimination; and
- review and acknowledge in writing any findings and recommendations of the National Accessibility Advisory Group.

### **10.2 Associate and Assistant Directors**

The associate and assistant directors have leadership responsibilities for implementing this Order and for ensuring employees, programs, and activities under their oversight comply with accessibility requirements. They will:

- coordinate and cooperate with regional directors, park superintendents, and program managers to advance Service-wide accessibility policies, goals, and initiatives;
- adopt or develop accessibility competencies appropriate to their workforces, provide ongoing training to support these competencies, and hold employees accountable for acquiring and maintaining the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet accessibility requirements;
- collaborate and coordinate with the Park Accessibility for Visitors and Employees Program to:
  - develop chapters of RM-42 relevant to their respective responsibilities;
  - develop and integrate accessibility requirements for visitors and employees and associated responsibilities into relevant Level 2 (Director's Orders) and Level 3 (reference manuals, handbooks, etc.) policies, procedures, and practices; and
  - provide employee training to develop and maintain accessibility competencies.
- have accessibility subject matter experts review new and existing policies to make sure they do not discriminate on the basis of disability;
- ensure programs and activities have the necessary funds, personnel, supplies, and equipment to implement the policies, procedures, and standards in this Order and RM-42;

- ensure projects and activities supported through fund sources under their purview comply with accessibility requirements; and
- appoint representatives to the National Accessibility Advisory Group from those nominated by program offices under their purview.

### **10.2.1 Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities and Lands**

The Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities, and Lands will:

- provide leadership direction to ensure:
  - facilities (including housing) and transportation systems for visitors and employees comply with accessibility requirements; and
  - projects managed by the Denver Service Center and the Historic Preservation Training Center comply with accessibility requirements.
- oversee the Park Accessibility for Visitors and Employees Program; and
- issue, and update as necessary, RM-42, with appropriate input from other associate and assistant directors.

#### **10.2.1.1 Park Accessibility for Visitors and Employees Program**

The Park Accessibility for Visitors and Employees Program will:

- collaborate with associate and assistant directors on the development of RM-42 and the development and integration of accessibility policies and responsibilities into relevant Level 2 and Level 3 policies, procedures, and practices;
- coordinate the National Accessibility Advisory Group, which represents the accessibility needs of NPS directorates and regions and their respective programs, offices, and parks;
- collaborate with associate, assistant, and regional directors; Director, Equal Employment Opportunity; park superintendents; and program and center managers to provide learning and development opportunities about accessibility and disability;
- provide technical assistance to NPS managers and employees to:
  - enhance awareness about and compliance with accessibility requirements; and
  - prevent and correct instances of disability discrimination or non-compliance with accessibility requirements.
- conduct outreach to national organizations representing the disability community and other Federal agencies with disability programs.

#### **10.2.1.2 National Accessibility Advisory Group**

The National Accessibility Advisory Group, coordinated by the Park Accessibility for Visitors and Employees Program, includes representatives from NPS directorates, regions, and parks.

The advisory group will:

- provide advice and make recommendations about training and technical assistance needs of NPS directorates, regions, and parks;
- disseminate information about accessibility to NPS managers and employees using various communication channels;
- collaborate with other NPS stakeholder groups to advance accessibility goals and objectives; and
- report in writing to the Director and Deputy Director(s) with findings on compliance with accessibility requirements and present recommendations for corrective actions.

### **10.2.2 Associate Director, Business Services**

The Associate Director, Business Services will:

- provide leadership direction to ensure fee program information, operations, and equipment meet accessibility requirements;
- integrate language about accessibility requirements and accountability in concession contracts, CUAs, agreements, and annual operating plans; and
- develop and implement a system for regular reviews of accessibility of the operations of organizations acting on behalf of the NPS based on the requirements.

### **10.2.3 Assistant Director, Communications**

The Assistant Director, Communications will:

- provide leadership direction to ensure NPS digital communications (internal and external) comply with section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and give people with disabilities equal access to information; and
- collaborate with the Associate Director, Information Resources and Associate Director, Interpretation, Education, and Volunteers on information and communication technology accessibility requirements, competencies, and training.

### **10.2.4 Associate Director, Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science**

The Associate Director, Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science will provide leadership direction to ensure:

- the highest level of access to historic properties and other cultural and natural resources that is practicable and consistent with preservation laws, regulations, and standards;
- documents and other materials preserved by the NPS are accessible to people with disabilities; and
- the disability community and disability experience are included in NPS efforts to preserve, protect, and share history.

### **10.2.5 Associate Director, Information Resources**

The Associate Director, Information Resources will:

- provide leadership direction to ensure the acquisition, development, and use of information and communication technology products, platforms, and services comply with section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and other applicable laws, regulations, and standards; and
- collaborate, as necessary, with the Assistant Director, Communications and the Associate Director, Interpretation, Education, and Volunteers on information and communication technology accessibility requirements, competencies, and training.

### **10.2.6 Associate Director, Interpretation, Education, and Volunteers**

The Associate Director, Interpretation, Education, and Volunteers will:

- provide leadership direction to ensure:
  - interpretive, education, and volunteer programs, activities, and services provided by the NPS and organizations acting on its behalf comply with accessibility requirements; and

- projects managed by the Harpers Ferry Center comply with accessibility requirements.
- collaborate, as necessary, with:
  - the Associate Director, Park Planning Facilities and Lands and Associate Director, Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science on interpretive media in facilities;
  - the Assistant Director, Communications and the Associate Director, Information Resources on information and communication technology accessibility requirements, competencies, and training; and
  - the Associate Director, Partnerships and Civic Engagement to issue guidance and provide training and information to help organizations acting on behalf of the NPS comply with accessibility requirements.

### **10.2.7 Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science**

The Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science will provide leadership direction to:

- ensure equitable access to scientific information, reports, and data; and
- deliver knowledge from social science and visitor use research to help park and program managers better understand equity of access and barriers to access.

### **10.2.8 Associate Director, Partnerships and Civic Engagement**

The Associate Director, Partnerships and Civic Engagement will:

- collaborate with the Associate Director, Interpretation, Education, and Volunteers to issue guidance and provide training and information to help organizations acting on behalf of the NPS comply with accessibility requirements;
- ensure partnerships, outdoor recreation and conservation, tourism, and civic engagement activities are accessible to people with disabilities; and
- focus NPS civic engagement and tourism activities on people with disabilities and the disability community.

### **10.2.9 Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection**

The Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection will:

- integrate accessibility requirements and responsibilities into emergency services, incident management, law enforcement activities, and wilderness stewardship program activities to ensure:
  - the needs of people with disabilities are met during emergency preparedness, response, and recovery activities;
  - law enforcement personnel use best practices to respect the civil rights of and prevent discrimination against people with disabilities; and
  - people with disabilities have appropriate access to wilderness consistent with law.
- include accessibility in programs related to life, health, and safety.

### **10.2.10 Associate Director, Workforce and Inclusion**

The Associate Director, Workforce and Inclusion will:

- ensure reasonable accommodations are provided to employees and applicants with disabilities consistent with Director's Order #16A;

- collaborate with the Park Accessibility for Visitors and Employees Program on issues related to accessible employee facilities;
- provide Service-wide guidance on:
  - development of appropriate accessibility competencies for NPS managers and employees; and
  - appropriate methods for corrective action when NPS employees fail to comply with accessibility requirements or discriminate against people with disabilities.
- include people with disabilities in relevancy, diversity, and inclusion efforts, in coordination with the Park Accessibility for Visitors and Employees Program; and
- support interdisciplinary collaboration on the development and presentation of accessibility training.

### **10.3 Comptroller**

The Comptroller will:

- issue documentation, accounting, and internal control procedures, through RM-42 and other relevant Level 2 and Level 3 policies and procedures, for meeting applicable accessibility requirements in projects funded by nationally managed funds; and
- include accessibility compliance in accountability and auditing functions to prevent and mitigate financial risk from any failure to comply with accessibility requirements.

### **10.4 Director, Office of Equal Employment Opportunity Programs**

The Director, Office of Equal Employment Opportunity Programs will implement an effective, efficient, and unbiased process for receiving, investigating, and resolving public civil rights complaints based on disability.

### **10.5 Regional Directors**

Regional directors provide leadership for region-wide implementation of this Order and compliance with accessibility requirements. They will:

- assign a senior-level staff member as the regional accessibility official with authority to ensure accessibility efforts are coordinated across regional divisions and programs;
- ensure regional office staff have the technical expertise and capacity to support park needs and to review park projects related to accessibility;
- ensure park projects reviewed, coordinated, or implemented by the regional office comply with accessibility requirements;
- withhold approval, support, or funding of projects that do not comply with the accessibility requirements;
- hold park superintendents and regional program managers accountable for compliance with the accessibility requirements;
- ensure park superintendents, regional program managers, and employees have access to timely information about accessibility; and
- select representatives for the National Accessibility Advisory Group from those nominated by regional program offices and parks.

## 10.6 Superintendents

Superintendents will:

- assign a senior-level staff member as the park accessibility official with authority to ensure accessibility efforts are coordinated across park divisions and programs;
- ensure park staff receive the training and information necessary to gain and maintain accessibility competencies relevant to their roles, in collaboration with the Park Accessibility for Visitors and Employees Program;
- take corrective action when park staff do not comply with accessibility requirements or discriminate against people with disabilities;
- issue and maintain park-specific instructions, standard operating procedures, directives, and other guidance that comply with accessibility requirements and do not discriminate against people with disabilities;
- ensure park facilities, transportation systems, interpretive and educational programs and services, information and communication technology, and commercial services comply with accessibility requirements;
- ensure accessibility subject matter experts review proposed projects for compliance with accessibility requirements;
- ensure funded projects have sufficient scope and funding to comply with accessibility requirements;
- ensure contracts, CUAs, and agreements with organizations acting on behalf of the NPS specify the need to comply with accessibility requirements and methods for addressing non-compliance;
- withhold acceptance of deliverables from organizations acting on behalf of the NPS that do not comply with the accessibility requirements;
- provide the public with accurate, up-to-date information about the accessibility of park facilities, programs, services, and activities; and
- establish relationships with and consult the disability community equally with other stakeholder groups.

## 10.7 Regional and Park Accessibility Officials

Regional and park accessibility officials oversee and ensure coordination of accessibility efforts across divisions and programs within their regions or parks. They may delegate operational duties, but not accountability, to a regional or park accessibility coordinator or coordinators.

## 11. Related Sources of Guidance

[Policy Memorandum 18-02: Use of Service Animals by Visitors with Disabilities – Interim Policy](#)

[Director’s Order #2: Park Planning](#) and Reference Manual 2

[Director’s Order #6: Interpretation and Education](#)

[Director’s Order #7: Volunteers-in-Parks](#) and [Reference Manual 7](#)

[Director’s Order #16A: Reasonable Accommodation for Applicants and Employees with Disabilities](#)

[Director’s Order #17: Tourism](#)

[Director’s Order #20: Agreements](#)

[Director’s Order #24: Museum Collections Management and Museum Handbook](#)

30-day external review draft. Submit comments by **Thursday, January 9, 2025**, via the [Comment Form](#). The draft Order and comment form are available at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/policy/new.htm>.

[Director's Order #26: Youth Programs](#)

[Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management, NPS-28, and Preservation Brief 32: Making Historic Properties Accessible](#)

[Director's Order #32: Cooperating Associations](#) and [Reference Manual 32](#)

[Director's Order #36: NPS Housing Management](#) and [Reference Manual 36](#)

[Director's Order #41: Wilderness Stewardship](#) and [Reference Manual 41](#)

[Director's Order #70: Internet and Intranet Publishing](#)

[Director's Order #75A: Civic Engagement and Public Involvement](#)

[Director's Order #80: Real Property Asset Management](#)

[Director's Order #90: Value Analysis](#)

[Commercial Service Guide, National Park Service Commercial Services Program](#)

-----End of Director's Order-----