

ADA Accommodations in Michigan Courts

Frequently Asked Questions

People with disabilities have the right to equal access to Michigan courts. The Americans with Disabilities Act (also called “the ADA”) says courts must accommodate people with disabilities by providing **reasonable modifications**.

Michigan courts usually refer to reasonable modifications as “reasonable accommodations.” In this guide, we will use the word “**reasonable accommodation**” to refer to reasonable modifications under the ADA.

This guide explains how to request an accommodation and what to expect.

What qualifies as a disability under the ADA?

To qualify as a person with a disability under the ADA, you must meet one of these criteria:

- You have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more **major life activities**. Major life activities are activities people do every day, like walking, breathing, seeing, and thinking. They also include internal processes like regulating blood sugar.
- You have a history of having such an impairment
- You are treated by others as having such an impairment

The ADA defines disability broadly. Click this link to learn more about the ADA definition of disability: <https://www.ada.gov/topics/intro-to-ada/>.

What is an ADA reasonable accommodation?

A “reasonable accommodation” is a change or assistance that helps to remove barriers for a person with a disability. Reasonable accommodations may include:

- Making reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures
- Ensuring physical access
- Providing effective communication

Who can request accommodations?

Anyone with a disability who needs an accommodation to participate in a court program, service, or activity may request an accommodation. This includes people involved in a court case, such as defendants, witnesses, jurors, and attorneys. This also includes people involved with court business.



Court programs, services, and activities include things that happen in the court building. They can also include the court website, mediation programs, and court classes, even if they happen outside the court building.

What types of accommodations may I request?

Courts can provide many different accommodations to help people with disabilities get equal access to the court and court activities. Some examples of accommodations you could request include:

- Sign language interpreter or CART services
- Assistive listening devices
- Documents in accessible formats (such as large print or electronic)
- Frequent breaks
- Scheduling at the beginning or end of the day
- Permission to attend with a support person
- Assistance with filing documents, such as accepting a filing by email
- Permitting remote participation, such as by Zoom

This is not a complete list. There can be other reasonable accommodations that help people with disabilities to access the court. Click this link to read more examples of accommodations: <https://askjan.org/a-to-z.cfm>. Those examples are of workplace accommodations, but similar accommodations can help in court.

How do I request accommodations from the court?

Start by filling out the **MC 70 Request for Reasonable Accommodations and Response** form. Click this link to find the **MC 70** form:

<https://www.courts.michigan.gov/siteassets/forms/scao-approved/mc70.pdf>

You may also want to fill out the Michigan court Self-Evaluation Checklist. Click this link to find the Self-Evaluation Checklist:

<https://www.courts.michigan.gov/4a23eb/siteassets/court-administration/access-temporary/ada/ada-selfevaluationchecklist.pdf>. This checklist will tell the court about your needs. This can help the court think of possible accommodations.

Request the accommodation as soon as possible to give the court time to decide what to do. The court may need to talk to you to discuss alternatives. Send the request and checklist to the court's ADA Coordinator. The court's ADA Coordinator is a person who decides how the court can accommodate a disability. You can mail the request, bring it to the court, or ask the court for an email address to email it.



How do I contact my court's ADA coordinator?

Click this link for contact information for ADA Coordinators for many courts in Michigan: <https://www.courts.michigan.gov/trial-court-directory/>. If their contact information is not there, you can check your court's website. You can also call your court and ask to be transferred to the ADA Coordinator.

Do I need to provide medical documentation of my disability?

Not always. Many accommodation requests can be approved without medical documentation.

If your need for an accommodation is not obvious, the court may ask for more information. The court can ask for information needed to understand your disability-related needs. The court may ask you for some documentation, but only if it is necessary to evaluate your request.

Do I have to request a reasonable accommodation to bring my service dog?

No. You do not need to request a reasonable accommodation to be allowed to bring your service dog. Courts usually must allow service animals to accompany people with disabilities. Service dogs should be allowed in all areas of the court where the public is allowed to go.

Not all support dogs are service dogs. Service dogs must be individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Service dogs must be housebroken. Service dogs must remain under the handler's control.

It is a good idea to tell the court in advance that you will be bringing your service dog. This is not legally required, but it can help to avoid any misunderstandings.

Is the court required to grant my accommodation?

No, the court is not required to grant every accommodation requested. The court should work with you to understand your individual disability-related needs. Then, the court should work with you to find an accommodation that works for both you and the court. This is called the "interactive process." It can involve discussions and back-and-forth.

Some requests would **fundamentally alter the program** or **cause an undue financial or administrative burden** to the court. The court does not have to grant those requests.

- Something **fundamentally alters** the court's services if it changes main functions.
- Something may be an **undue financial or administrative burden** if it is very expensive or would take a lot of staff time to provide.



Even if the court can't grant your request, it must still try to accommodate you. The court should propose alternatives that would meet your needs up to the point of **fundamental alteration** or **undue burden**.

If the court grants my accommodation, who is responsible for paying for it?

The court must provide reasonable accommodations at no cost to the person requesting them, even if the court buys a device or pays for a service. For example, the court may provide a sign language interpreter, CART services, or an assistive listening device. The court is responsible for arranging and paying for these accommodations.

What does the court ADA Coordinator do?

The court's ADA Coordinator helps to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to the court. They receive and review accommodation requests, answer questions, and can help explain the court's ADA process. If you are unsure what accommodations to request or need help filling out the **MC 70** form, contact your court's ADA Coordinator.

How long does the court have to respond to my request for accommodations?

While there is no strict time limit, the court's ADA Coordinator should respond to your request before the court appearance or activity. You should request the accommodation as far in advance as possible. If needed, you can call the court's ADA Coordinator and ask for an update.

What if my accommodation request is denied?

If your accommodation request is denied, you can ask for a review of your request. You can fill out the **MC 70a Review of Request for Reasonable Accommodations and Response** form and send it to your court's ADA Coordinator. Click this link to find the MC 70a form: <https://www.courts.michigan.gov/4a1313/siteassets/forms/scao-approved/mc70a.pdf>

You can mail the **MC 70a** form, bring it to the court, or ask the court for an email address to email it. The ADA Coordinator should respond to you in writing in an accessible format.

What if the review of my request is also denied?

If the review of your request is also denied, you can request an appeal review. Submit this appeal soon after the review of your request is denied. This appeal review is done by the Michigan Supreme Court's State Court Administrative Office ("SCAO") or another office chosen by the State Court.

Your appeal must be in writing. Email your appeal to BrotzmanE@courts.mi.gov.

- Your appeal must include:



- The name and contact information of the person filing the appeal
- Why you think the court failed to accommodate your disability. Describe this in detail.
- What you think the court should do to fix the problem. Describe this in detail.

The Michigan Supreme Court should respond to you in writing in an accessible format. You can read the Michigan Supreme Court Grievance and Appeal Procedure for more detailed instructions. Click this link to find the Grievance and Appeal Procedure:

<https://www.courts.michigan.gov/4ab0e5/siteassets/court-administration/access-temporary/ada/msc-title-ii-ada-grievance-and-appeal-procedure-2025.pdf>

Remember

- Request your reasonable accommodations as early as possible, or as soon as you learn of a barrier.
- Be clear about what barrier you are facing and what accommodation would help.
- Be prepared to consider alternatives offered by the court.
- If you have questions or need help, contact the court's ADA Coordinator.
- If your request is denied, you have the right to ask for a review.

You can find more information about the ADA process and court accommodations here:

- Michigan One Court of Justice website:
<https://www.courts.michigan.gov/administration/trial-court/trial-court-operations/americans-with-disabilities/>
- Michigan Legal Help:
<https://michiganlegalhelp.org/resources/going-court/requesting-accommodation-if-you-are-person-disability-and-have-go-court>
- Southwest ADA Center - Advancing Court Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities:
<http://www.southwestada.org/html/publications/Title2/ADA%20Court%20Guide-SWADAC-FINAL.pdf>
- ADA.gov: <https://www.ada.gov/topics/title-ii/#title-ii-applies-to-state-local-programs>

DRM currently does not have resources to individually assist or represent individuals in these cases.