



## *City of Miami Gardens*

# **Americans with Disabilities Act**



## **Interim Compliance Status**

**December 2007**

The City of Miami Gardens is committed to the principals of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended, and the provisions of Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. As a new municipality, it has taken some time to be in a position to adequately address all related issues. We are now in the process of completing a full self-evaluation and transition plan as required by these regulations. However, from the beginning of the City in 2003, City staff has attempted to conform its practices to the requirement of these laws as best we could given the City initial financial challenges and lack of staff.

Below is a brief status of our accomplishment to date. We are continuing to expand on these, not waiting for the self-evaluation to be completed.

### **City Hall**

The City Hall complex is connected by a series of accessible ramps and doorways throughout the complex in an effort to provide easy access to all. The City Hall complex provides easily accessible parking locations for customers needing assistance, as well as user friendly service counters. Restroom are all compliant to ADA standards is the emergency alarm system. Meeting room and hallways are also compliant.

### **Parks & Recreation**

After becoming a city in 2003, Miami Dade County transferred some 16 parks to the City in 2004. These parks were bay-and-large, not ADA compliant. The City has made great strides in retrofitting these facilities where possible to accommodate persons with disabilities. All buildings are now accessible with designated parking. However, in many of these facilities, it is physically and financially impossible to bring them into full compliance.

Because of this, the City has embarked on a \$30 million program (fully funded) to renovate all of the City's parks and park facilities. Over the next five to six years, every facility will be renovated, from ball fields and walking paths to restrooms and classrooms. Renovations will include full ADA compliance.

At this date, most of the City's program offerings are also available to persons with disabilities. It is expected that the self-evaluation lead to additional improvements. In 2006, the City purchased a fully ADA-Compliant mini bus for use in its programs.

### **Personnel/ Human Resources**

**Employee Handbook:** The City of Miami Gardens does not tolerate any form of harassment or discrimination and is committed to equal opportunity employment. These issues are all clearly addressed in City's Employee Handbook which outlines what is considered harassment and those groups, including the disabled who are protected under City's policy. The handbook is discussed with, and a copy given to, each new employee and is the cornerstone of our personnel policy. The sections on discrimination are read aloud with every new employee.

The main areas of City's Employee Handbook that relate to people with disabilities are listed below:

1. OUR POLICY ON UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT
2. OUR POLICY ON EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
3. OUR POLICY ON REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

**Employee Reasonable Accommodation Requests:** Reasonable accommodation requests are handled with the utmost respect and confidentiality. Human Resources Staff maintains separate files on a variety of areas including: personnel, payroll, benefits and medical/reasonable accommodation requests.

**Training:** In addition to providing an environment that does not tolerate discrimination, the City requires that its employees be aware of issues facing people with disabilities. Human Resources is committed to providing regular training in the following areas:

- Sexual Harassment Awareness
- Domestic Violence Training
- Requirement of ADA and Section 503
- How to work with people who have disabilities
- How to work with individuals suffering from mental illness

In addition to group trainings, employees are also encouraged to take classes in areas that impact their individual positions.

**Recruiting and Training:** The City actively recruits residents for employment. We do this by advertising in local newspapers and by posting job openings in community spaces at City Hall and on our website. We provide training opportunities through the development of special job classes of “trainees.” This provides on-the-job training for individuals needing experience to meet the minimum of a particular job classification.

**City’s Employee (EAP):** The City’s EAP publishes a periodic newsletter highlighting a different health and mental health topics including physical and mental disabilities. It is an open forum for employees to learn more and ask questions about people with disabilities. This newsletter is distributed to over 350 employees.

### **Communications/ Notices**

**Advertisements and Marketing:** The two key areas of City programs that require advertising/ marketing are meeting notices and advertisements for employment:

#### **Meeting Notices**

Since the City’s initial organization in late 2003, the City has been publishing its notices of meetings in local newspapers. In particular, the City Council Agenda has been published with the required ADA notice of assistance

available. The City utilizes the services of a translation service and well as the Florida Relay Service. Employment ads have also carries an anti-discrimination notice.

### Job Postings

Employment opportunities are posted in a variety of publications and announcements are posted at City Hall and on the City's website. All announcements state that Miami Gardens is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer through the standard, accepted notation: "EOE M/F/D/V; Drug-Free Workplace." Job information including job descriptions, employment applications and other forms can be downloaded from City's website [www.miamigardens-fl.gov](http://www.miamigardens-fl.gov).

**On-Site Notices and Signage:** Located at every City facility is an ADA and 504 Notice. This posting clearly outlines the City's non-discrimination policy. It has the name, phone number and address for City's 504/ADA coordinator to call in case a person feels that he or she has been discriminated against. It also lists the TDD number to call. This notice is printed in 24 font and on a 11x17 inch sign.

**City's Website:** A number of forms, lists and other vital information can be found on City's website, [www.miamigardens-fl.gov](http://www.miamigardens-fl.gov). These include: Job openings, Applications for Employment, information about City's different departments, key phone numbers, and City's ADA-related policies. Most items on the website can be viewed by person's with vision impairments in larger font through the viewer's browser or can be downloaded and printed in larger font.

**TTY/ Interpretation Services:** CITY has arrangements with several private services for interpretations services and also used Florida Relay Services for telephonic communications. Requests for such services in connection with City business can be made with 48 hours notice through the Office of the City Clerk.

### Policies/ Procedures/ Forms

**Forms-** The City of Miami Gardens offers forms in a variety of formats to accommodate a variety of disabilities though we believe that the self-evaluation will provide additional guidance in this area. We freely mail forms to Residents and Applicants who are unable to obtain them at one of our offices. We offer forms in an enlarged font for those who have a visual disability upon request and make many of

the forms available on the City's website. Council meetings are available in audio format upon request. CITY Staff is always available to help resident fill out forms.

### **Grievance Procedure and Complaint Process**

**Grievance Procedure:** The City's Grievance Process is outlined on this website provides a timeline for the grievance process. It describes the procedures to obtain a hearing and the procedures governing a hearing.

**ADA Complaint/Resolution Forms\*:** This is used when a resident wishes to file a complaint against staff. It requires supervisors to respond to the resident/customer within 3 working days. It gives options for follow-up via a phone call or meeting in person. After the complaint has been filed, the supervisor must follow up with a Resolution Report stating what came about in the initial investigation and if the client was satisfied with the outcome. It allows the client to appeal to a higher level if they desire. This form is also available on this web site.

\* Both the Grievance and Complaint Resolution forms are optional and residents can file a complaint in person or over the telephone with the City's Community Outreach Office. If a resident wants to fill out a form and is unable to, then the appropriate staff person will assist them.

### **Use of Contracts**

In order to provide opportunities to disadvantaged businesses, the City created the standard language in all of its contracts to ensure that the contractor is familiar with City policy regarding discrimination and its effort to expand opportunities for small and disadvantaged businesses. It requires that contractors also utilize these affirmative efforts to increase participation in such contracts.

**Bidding and Request for Proposal (RFP) Process:** The City maintains a list of registered vendors to whom it distributes any RFP or bidding opportunities, both in-house and through DemandStar, an on-line bidding service open to all bidders. In order to maintain the diversity of this list, the purchasing staff does outreach to disadvantaged businesses including holding special workshops. In addition to this outreach, the City publishes RFPs and request for bids in the following newspapers: The Miami Herald, DemandStar.com.