

2024 Annual Report on ADA Compliance

Chicago Police Department

Executive Summary

In 2024, the Chicago Police Department (CPD) continued to deepen its commitment to equitable and accessible policing for individuals with disabilities. The ADA Compliance Officer supported the Department to advance meaningful engagement with community partners, modernized policy directives, expand officer training, and reinforced internal accountability processes to better align with the spirit and letter of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Over the course of the year, the Department built upon three years of consistent outreach, engaging with dozens of disability-focused organizations. These engagements included in-person presentations, policy discussions, and participation in conferences and advisory meetings, most notably, the Alzheimer's Conference for First Responders, co-hosted with the Alzheimer's Association of Illinois and the Illinois State Police. These ongoing conversations have helped shape a stronger network between the Department and the communities it serves and have allowed CPD to respond more thoughtfully to the real-world concerns of individuals with disabilities and their families.

One of the most significant accomplishments in 2024 was the drafting and revision of four key departmental directives addressing interactions with people who have disabilities. These policy drafts were informed by years of community feedback and formally shared with disability organizations for review, including braille-accessible versions for blind and low-vision stakeholders. The Department's approach to policy development reflects a more inclusive and responsive model of public safety, one that actively centers the lived experiences of individuals with disabilities.

Training continued to be a cornerstone of CPD's ADA compliance strategy. In 2024, the ADA Compliance Officer completed several national training courses and collaborated with the Education and Training Division to revise or develop six ADA-focused training bulletins for officers. These covered a range of essential topics, including autism, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, service animals, and more. By translating complex medical and social considerations into practical tools for field officers, the Department is working to ensure that its personnel are prepared to respond with professionalism and empathy in every encounter.

Equitable communication remained another priority throughout 2024. American Sign Language usage through the Department's contracted provider increased significantly, reflecting improved awareness and accessibility. The ADA Compliance Officer also worked to promote wider adoption of the LanguageLine InSight App across the Department, further supporting real-time communication between officers and Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals during critical incidents.

In addition to community outreach and training, the ADA Compliance Officer collaborated closely with other city departments and agencies through regional working groups and planning networks. The Department continued facility inspections to assess ADA compliance and began refining its follow-up process to ensure accountability for accessibility improvements at district stations. The

ADA Compliance Officer also served as a resource for internal divisions—such as Research and Development and Risk Management—offering guidance on policies related to missing persons, arrestee processing, and disaster preparedness for older adults and individuals with disabilities.

As the Department looks ahead to 2025 and beyond, its goals include expanding youth engagement around disability inclusion, increasing usage of technology to support individuals with cognitive disabilities, and finalizing the next set of officer training bulletins. These efforts will be carried out with the continued support of the Community Outreach Coordinators and in alignment with the City’s broader goals for accessible governance. CPD remains committed to building a public safety model that honors the rights, voices, and dignity of all people—especially those historically underserved due to disability.

Introduction

CPD remains committed to ensuring full accessibility, inclusion, and equity in its services and operations, particularly for individuals with disabilities. The ADA Compliance Officer plays a critical role in advancing this mission by coordinating policy updates, providing training, collaborating across agencies, and engaging with community partners.

This annual report offers a comprehensive overview of ADA-related activities from January through December 2024. It highlights achievements in community engagement, policy development, officer training, and system-wide collaboration, while outlining strategic goals for the years ahead.

Community Engagement and Outreach

Community engagement remains the cornerstone of CPD’s ADA compliance strategy. Over the past three years, the ADA Compliance Officer, supported by Community Outreach Coordinators within the Office of Equity and Engagement, has developed and sustained meaningful partnerships with many community organizations.

These connections have been built through a combination of in-person presentations, Zoom meetings, on-site conferences, stakeholder roundtables, and direct consultations regarding CPD policies and practices. This proactive outreach ensures that the voices of individuals with disabilities, their caregivers, and advocates are meaningfully integrated into departmental decision-making.

Key Community Partners in 2024 Include:

- LaRabida Children’s Hospital
- Elderwerks
- Special Olympics Illinois
- Alzheimer’s Association of Illinois
- Access Living
- Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education (ICRE)
- Chicago Autism Network

- American Diabetes Association
- U.S. Department of Justice – Federal Bureau of Prisons
- Epilepsy Foundation of Greater Chicago

Each engagement provided a valuable opportunity to gather feedback on CPD's ADA policies, clarify procedures, and strengthen mutual understanding between the Department and the disability community.

One of the year's most impactful events was the Alzheimer's Conference for First Responders, held in June 2024 in Oak Brook, IL. The event, organized in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association of Illinois and Illinois State Police, drew first responders from across Cook County and surrounding regions. Sessions addressed search-and-rescue operations, effective communication with individuals living with dementia, and strategies to support families during high-stress incidents.

This conference exemplifies CPD's effort to lead with empathy, improve field-level understanding, and ensure public safety responses are rooted in dignity and care.

Policy Development and Review

In 2024, the ADA Compliance Officer supported a substantial revision of four key departmental policies related to interactions with individuals with disabilities. These revised directives reflect the best national practices and community-driven input, and are intended to guide respectful, lawful, and effective police responses.

Revised ADA Policies Distributed for Community Review:

- People with Disabilities
- Interactions with Persons Who Are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing
- Interactions with Persons with Physical Disabilities
- Interactions with Persons with Non-Visible Disabilities

To ensure accessibility, all draft policies were translated into Braille and disseminated to partner organizations such as Access Living, Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind, and the National Federation for the Blind.

Background on Policy Engagement

These policy updates build on years of sustained engagement. Since the drafting of the first Persons with Disabilities Special Order in 2016, CPD has worked to refine its practices through a multi-year approach. From 2021 to 2024, efforts included:

- An 80-question survey distributed to members of the disability community
- Focus groups and public listening sessions
- Outreach to more than 72 agencies serving people with disabilities
- Collaboration with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities and other civic partners

- Field officer and academy-level feedback sessions

This iterative process ensures CPD's policies not only comply with federal ADA regulations but also reflect lived experiences and practical realities from the field.

Officer Training and Professional Development

Enhancing officers' understanding of disability and their confidence in engaging respectfully is essential to CPD's mission. In 2024, the ADA Compliance Officer completed a series of professional development programs and guided the development of new internal training materials.

Professional Training Completed in 2024:

- ADA Virtual Conference (Pacific ADA Center) – Feb 2024
- Accommodations 101 (National Deaf Center) – Jan 2024
- DOJ and ADA National Network Webinars on:
 - Criminal Justice Interactions with Individuals with Disabilities
 - ADA Software Accessibility
 - Disability Bias and Policing
 - Communication in Healthcare Settings
 - ADA in the Courtroom

These trainings expanded CPD's capacity to build trauma-informed, legally sound, and community-sensitive responses.

Training Bulletins Under Development

Six ADA-related training bulletins were collaboratively written in partnership with the CPD Education and Training Division. These bulletins integrate real-world feedback from officers and community members and are now undergoing external review:

- Interacting with the Deaf Community
- Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias
- Understanding Diabetes: A Law Enforcement Perspective
- People with Disabilities
- Service Animals
- Autism and Police Response

Future Topics Planned: Epilepsy and Stroke

These materials are expected to be finalized by mid-2025 and will support more consistent, confident responses in the field.

Working Groups and Interagency Collaboration

To remain responsive to both legal obligations and community expectations, CPD actively participates in ADA working groups and regional collaborations.

Key Working Group Participation:

- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP): A two-year cohort providing ADA coordinators with structured peer-learning and problem-solving space
- Elderwerks: Distribution of Senior Resource Directories to Older Adult Liaisons across all districts
- Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD): Hosting and participating in numerous public-facing events, resource fairs, and departmental briefings

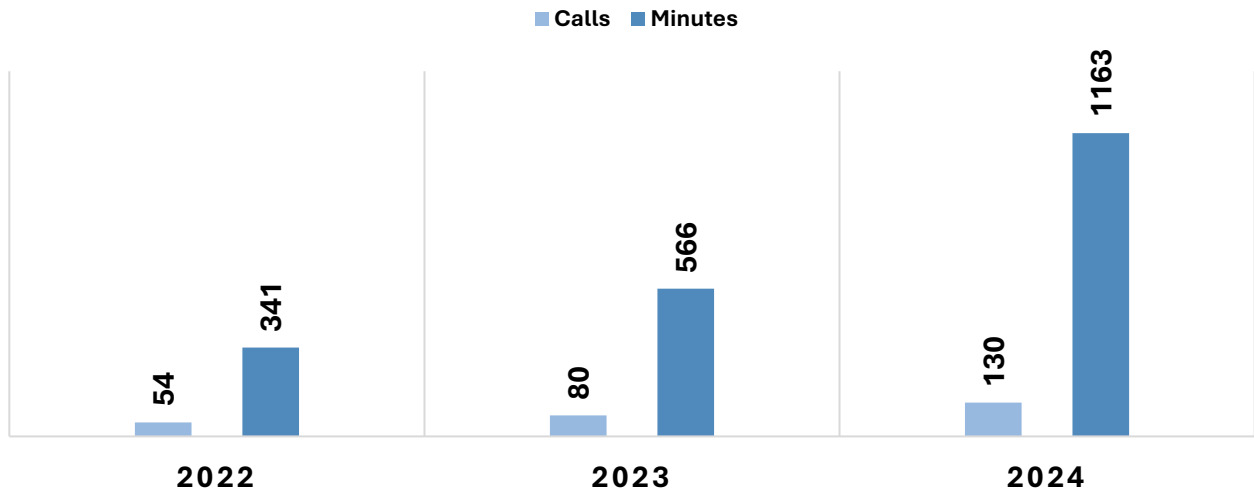
Additionally, CPD’s partnership with the Training and Education Video Services Unit has yielded updated digital training content on topics such as autism awareness and service animals, ensuring that ADA learning is accessible across formats.

Communications Access and ASL Interpretation

Ensuring effective communication with individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing remains a department priority. The ADA Compliance Officer monitors usage of American Sign Language (ASL) services and works to improve officer awareness of communication tools.

The Department continued to contract with the Chicago Hearing Society to support in-person ASL interpreter needs when requested. Additionally in 2024, CPD saw a sixty-one percent increase of ASL requests through the LanguageLine app InSight.

ASL INTERPRETATION VIA INSIGHT APP



Facility Inspections and ADA Compliance Oversight

In 2024, the ADA Compliance Officer continued supporting CPD facility compliance through collaboration with the Inspection and Risk Management Divisions.

Upon receiving facility inspection reports, the Compliance Officer initiates 30- and 60-day follow-up reviews to track completion of work orders. As CPD enters the next Independent Monitoring Report cycle, a formal policy will be developed to provide clear guidance to command staff on documentation and timelines.

Goals for 2025–2026

Looking ahead, the ADA Compliance Officer has outlined the following priorities, pending budget approval:

- Finalize and implement training bulletins on Epilepsy and Stroke
- Promote the use of QR codes to assist with identification of individuals with Alzheimer's, dementia, or emergency medical needs
- Increase adoption of the LanguageLine ASL app among field officers
- Develop ADA-focused youth outreach initiatives
- Expand community partnerships and feedback channels in underserved neighborhoods

These goals continue the department's trajectory of thoughtful engagement, practical reform, and deeper integration of ADA principles into everyday policing.

Conclusion

The year 2024 marked significant progress in CPD's efforts to operationalize ADA compliance, foster deeper community connections, and build a more inclusive department culture. Through extensive outreach, diligent policy revision, and strategic partnerships, the ADA Compliance Officer has helped position CPD as a learning organization, one that listens, evolves, and prioritizes the dignity and rights of every Chicagoan.

As CPD enters 2025, the Department remains committed to deepening its ADA efforts and delivering public safety that is fair, accessible, and responsive to all.