Center for Hearing Access
at The Shedd Institute

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Assistive Listening Systems

Below are limited key points. For comprehensive info, visit the ADA webpage, Center for Hearing Access.

1. Provide Assistive Listening Systems (ALS)

- Applies to Title II entities (State and local governments), Title III entities (businesses and nonprofit organizations that serve the public), and other areas.
- Assistive listening system technologies:
  - Four meet the ADA: hearing loop, FM/RF system, infrared system, and direct-wired (rare).
  - With Audio Over Wi-Fi assistive listening systems, *there is no known product that meets the ADA*.
  - With Auracast streamed assistive listening systems, it is too soon to say if products meet the ADA, as the international standards are not expected until late 2027.

a. Entity *With* a Public Address System

- 219.2 Required Systems. "In each assembly area where audible communication is integral to the use of the space, an assistive listening system **shall** be provided." This also applies to unamplified performances and events - a system **shall** be provided. Required Places.

b. Entity *Without* a Public Address System (Effective Communication)

- Examples: service counters, one-on-one communication, meetings without a PA system, etc.
- The ADA requires Effective Communication with people who have hearing loss. Aids and services include assistive listening systems and devices (and 6+ other ways).

c. Courtrooms

2. Provide Receivers, Headphones, and Neckloops

- Table 219.3 Receivers for Assistive Listening Systems." Northwest ADA Center Receiver calculator. The hearing-aid compatibility requirement is satisfied by neckloops.

3. Provide Signage

- 216.10 Each area **shall** provide signs of the availability of the assistive listening system. Signs shall comply with 703.5 (visual characters) and shall include the International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss Required signs. In the U.S., the background is commonly blue.

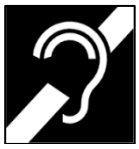


Figure 703.7.2.4 International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss

4. Provide Public Notice

- **Title II** facilities: Public entities are **required** to ensure that people with hearing impairments can obtain information as to the "existence and location of accessible services, activities, and facilities." The ADA Coordinator's name and contact information **must** be provided to the public.
- **Title III** facilities are *strongly recommended* to provide the same information.

5. Facility Owners Retain Responsibility

- ADA Title II. § 35.130 General prohibitions against discrimination. (b)(1) A public entity, in providing any aid, benefit, or service, may not, directly or through contractual, licensing, or other arrangements, on the basis of disability—(i) Deny a qualified individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in or benefit from the aid, benefit, or service. Type III facilities are similar.

About the Center for Hearing Access

Founded in 2024, the nonprofit Center for Hearing Access is a national advocacy and education initiative of The John G. Shedd Institute. We champion and educate users, sites, audiologists, and hearing instrument specialists about all ADA-compliant assistive listening systems and other strategies to increase access to healthcare, theaters, libraries, conferences, government offices, courtrooms, places of worship, and other public and private spaces.

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