

## General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

**Resolution No.:** 2024-A050  
**Title:** Publishing and Sharing Resources for Disability Access and Inclusion  
**Proposer:** House of Deputies Committee on the State of the Church  
**Topic:** Disabled Persons

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### **Directly Related:** (Attached)

2018-D097 Establish a Task Force on Accessibility and ADA Compliance  
2015-D043 Ensure Accessibility for Disabled Persons at All Church Events  
2009-A081 Make Reasonable Accommodation for People with Disabilities at Church Meetings  
2003-D051 Recommend that Meeting Locations Be Accessible to the Disabled  
1997-C046 Re-establish a Resource Center on the Disabled  
1994-D104 Authorize Continuation of the Task Force on Accessibility  
1991-D089 Commend Passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act  
1988-D004 Encourage Sensitivity to Persons With Disabilities  
1985-D130 Recommend and Direct Use of Funds for Employing Interpreters for the Deaf

### **Indirectly Related:** (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

2018-D048 Review Use of Disability Language in Governance Documents  
2015-A077 Publicize Formation Resources for People with Disabilities  
2009-A080 Address Access of Disabled Persons to Ministry Discernment  
2003-C027 Make the Church's Audio-visual Materials Accessible to All People  
2000-C030 Adopt NCC Statement on Disabilities

*In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, selecting "direct" resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The "direct" resolutions are attached and "indirect" resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#).*

# A050 - Publishing and Sharing Resources for Disability Access and Inclusion

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**Final Status:** Not Yet Finalized

**Proposed by:** House of Deputies Committee on the State of the Church

**Has Budget Implications:** No

**Cost:**

**Amends C&C or Rules of Order:** No

**Requests New Interim Body:** No

**Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib:** No

**Directs Dfms Staff:** Yes

**Directs Dioceses:** No

**Directs Executive Council:** No

**HiA:** HD

**Legislative Committee Currently Assigned:** 17 - Accessibility & Inclusion

**Completion Status:** Incomplete

**Latest House Action:** N/A

**Supporting Documents:** Yes

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## Resolution Text

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring,

That The Episcopal Church recognize that all people are children of God and that our Baptismal Covenant requires us to recognize the dignity of every human being; and be it further

*Resolved*, That disabled and Deaf people have been historically and systemically excluded from Church life and business throughout Church history; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Church has committed itself to voluntary compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act through creation of a Task Force on Disability and Deaf Access in 2018; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 81st General Convention direct the Episcopal Church Center to publicize, through the Episcopal Church website and by other appropriate means, to dioceses, congregations, and Christian Formation leaders, a Best Practices Guide for voluntary means of creating an accessible Church and a disability sensitivity and awareness training for all to use as resources in furtherance of an accessible Church.

## Explanation

The Church, over several decades, has promised to be accessible for disabled and Deaf people at all levels of the Church, and to commit to voluntary compliance with accessibility laws, notably the Americans with Disabilities Act (and, for diocese outside of the United States, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

In 2018, the 79th General Convention created a Task Force on Disability and Deaf Access to assess disability and Deaf accessibility throughout the Church. The Task Force's Blue Book Report made several suggestions for becoming an accessible Church, but did not publish or make available resources for the wider Church to use in taking this significant step forward.[i]

The Diocese of California created its own Task Force on Disability and Deaf Access at its 170th Diocesan Convention in 2019. That Task Force has developed both a Best Practices Guide for the voluntary, low-cost, and easy means of access and inclusion for disabled and Deaf people at all levels of the Church, including at the parish level. The Best Practices Guide was completed during the COVID-19 pandemic so as to include recommendations relevant to pandemic life and post-pandemic life where video conference platforms are more frequently used. The Task Force also created a disability sensitivity and awareness training that the Diocese has required all diocesan staff, both lay and clergy, with hiring responsibilities and the Commission on Ministry to take every three years. The Diocese mandated this disability sensitivity training at its 173rd Diocesan Convention in 2022.

The DioCal Guide and Training were developed by two members of the Disability Community, each of whom has not only lived experience with disability but also professional experience working for and with nationally-renowned disability rights organizations such as Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, Inc. and the National Association of the Deaf. These resources were developed specifically for use within a faith community and especially in The Episcopal Church. These resources were also inspired by existing resources in the Church of England's own disability resources, including the Disability Officer for the Diocese of Oxford.[ii]

The current House of Deputies Committee on the State of the Church includes multiple members who identify as disabled and/or as neurodiverse. The Committee thus recognizes the importance of making these resources widely available to the Church at large, particularly once the DioCal resources have been appropriately vetted, and urges this Convention to pass this resolution so that concrete steps towards Church-wide accessibility, as each Church institution and parish or congregation is able, can be made available throughout The Episcopal Church.

[i] [https://www.episcopalarchives.org/e-archives/gc\\_reports/reports/2022/bb\\_2022-R038.pdf](https://www.episcopalarchives.org/e-archives/gc_reports/reports/2022/bb_2022-R038.pdf)

[ii] <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/environment-and-social-justice/deafness-disability/>

Note: this resolution and/or its explanation contains external references, such as URLs of websites, that may not be in the required languages of General Convention. Because of copyright restrictions, the General Convention cannot provide translations. However, your web browser may be able to provide a machine translation into another language. If you need assistance with this, please contact [gc.support@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:gc.support@episcopalchurch.org).



**Resolution Number:** 2018-D097  
**Title:** Establish a Task Force on Accessibility and ADA Compliance  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Substituted and Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 79th General Convention reaffirm and renew its previous commitments to Resolutions 2003-D051 and 2015-D043, which require the Church to provide persons with disabilities and Deaf people with full independent accessibility to all official and ancillary events of the Church, including worship; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 79th General Convention establish a Task Force to review progress made toward full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and any other relevant statutes; consult with Church staff to ensure that materials, policies, and procedures for accessibility and reasonable accommodations are developed and implemented for each General Convention and ancillary Church events; and develop a means of reconciliation with people who have been excluded from Church events due to lack of accessibility or failure to provide reasonable accommodations; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Task Force shall consist of between five and nine members, to be appointed jointly by the President of the House of Deputies and the Presiding Bishop, and a majority of the members shall be people with disabilities and deaf people; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Task Force include such progress in their report to the 80th General Convention on their work; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$5,000 to allow for the work of this Task Force.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), p. 1109.



**Resolution Number:** 2015-D043  
**Title:** Ensure Accessibility for Disabled Persons at All Church Events  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church reaffirm and renew the Church's commitment to the spiritual and physical welcome of all people, including hospitality to and accommodation of people with disabilities, encouraging people with disabilities to become more active church members, to take leadership roles, and to increase awareness of people throughout the Church of the gifts that people with disabilities contribute; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church reaffirm and renew the call to leadership of the Episcopal Disability Network and Episcopal Conference of the Deaf in helping to challenge and guide our Church's work in this area; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church, in solidarity with the civil and human rights of all persons with disabilities, renew its commitment to voluntary compliance with the disability rights protections that apply in different countries of The Episcopal Church, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, among others; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 78th Convention of The Episcopal Church reaffirm and renew its commitment to Resolution 2003-D051, which requires the Church to provide full independent accessibility to all official and ancillary events of the Church for people with disabilities; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church develop and make readily available information on the process for requesting disability accommodations needed to fully participate in meetings, conventions, and other activities of the Church, including placing this information in event materials, on the Church website and relevant social media platforms; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church recognize the need for reconciliation with persons with disabilities who have been denied accommodations needed to participate in Church events or who have been otherwise excluded from the activities of the Church; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 78th General Convention request that the General Convention Office, along with leaders from the Episcopal Disability Network and the Episcopal Conference of the Deaf, compile a Best Practices Guide for providing disability accommodations at all official and ancillary Church events that will include resources and policies that would otherwise comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and UN CRPD, to be reviewed and updated at least once every triennium; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$80,000 (\$40,000 to fulfill accommodation requests at the 79th General Convention and \$40,000 to fulfill accommodations requests at ancillary meetings and events) for the implementation of this resolution.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), p. 946.



**Resolution Number:** 2009-A081  
**Title:** Make Reasonable Accommodation for People with Disabilities  
at Church Meetings  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

***Resolved, That The Episcopal Church dioceses or congregations make those reasonable accommodations necessary for the full participation of staff members or volunteers with disabilities who attend conferences or meetings on behalf of the Church.***

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), p. 630.



**Resolution Number:** 2003-D051  
**Title:** Recommend that Meeting Locations Be Accessible to the Disabled  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

***Resolved, That the 74th General Convention direct the Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Arrangements to recommend for future General Conventions, subsequent meetings of Executive Council, standing committees [sic], and Province meetings, only locations and schedules that provide full independent accessibility to all events, both official and ancillary, for all members of this Church including but not limited to the hearing impaired, sight impaired, and persons with other physical disabilities.***

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 337.





**Resolution Number:** 1997-C046  
**Title:** Re-establish a Resource Center on the Disabled  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred  
**Final Text:**

***Resolved, That the Episcopal Church re-establish and fund a resource office and center for information about persons with disabilities.***

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997* (New York: General Convention, 1998), p. 246.



**Resolution Number:** 1994-D104  
**Title:** Authorize Continuation of the Task Force on Accessibility  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred As Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the Presiding Bishop's Task Force on Accessibility be authorized to continue its work and ministry for the next triennium in providing leadership, training, and education to the Episcopal Church at large for the full participation of all disabled persons in the ongoing life of this Church; and be it further*  
*Resolved, That a program reserve account be budgeted at \$18,000 annually for the work of this Task Force for the next triennium, subject to funding in the budget.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), p. 699.



**Resolution Number:** 1991-D089  
**Title:** Commend Passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred As Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 1991 General Convention commend the President and the Congress of the United States on the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act; and be it further Resolved, That all agencies and organizations of the Episcopal Church be urged to comply voluntarily with the provisions of this Act.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Phoenix, 1991* (New York: General Convention, 1992), p. 840.



**Resolution Number:** 1988-D004  
**Title:** Encourage Sensitivity to Persons With Disabilities  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the Presiding Bishop's Task Force on Accessibility of this Church be commended and authorized to continue its work and ministry of providing leadership, training and education throughout this Church; and be it further*

*Resolved, That all Episcopal seminaries and schools of theological education identified with this Church be encouraged to confront the issue of architectural accessibility within their facilities; and be it further*

*Resolved, That said seminaries and schools of theological education be urged to incorporate into their curricula material relating to the ministry of persons having disabilities; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the administrators, staff and students of said seminaries and schools of theological education be encouraged to become knowledgeable of and sensitive to the pastoral and prophetic issues related to disabilities and persons who are disabled.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Detroit, 1988* (New York: General Convention, 1989), p. 194.



**Resolution Number:** 1985-D130  
**Title:** Recommend and Direct Use of Funds for Employing Interpreters for the Deaf  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred As Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 68th General Convention recommend that any and all Dioceses of the Episcopal Church having ministries with deaf people allocate a reasonable sum in the annual budgets to pay for interpreters for the deaf at conventions and other diocesan functions, thereby encouraging and enabling fuller participation in the life of the Church; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Executive Council be directed to include sufficient funds in their budgets to pay for interpreters for the deaf for all meetings at which deaf people are official participants; for meetings of the General Convention, should one or more deaf deputies be elected; and for all major addresses, services, and events at the General Convention.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 1985* (New York: General Convention, 1986), p. 260.