



CITY OF BRENTWOOD ADAPTIVE & INCLUSIVE RECREATION ASSESSMENT

A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT POLICIES & BEST PRACTICES

Prepared for the City of Brentwood Parks & Recreation Department
150 City Park Way Brentwood, CA 94513
<https://www.brentwoodca.gov/>

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INTRODUCTION



Moore Recreation Therapy & Consulting Inc.

Moore Recreation Therapy & Consulting Inc. have been providing contracted services to various group homes, treatment facilities, and hospitals in Yuba City, Sacramento, Fairfield, Lodi, and Stockton, Ca. since 2011. Our team of certified recreation therapists, implement various services such as leisure education/ awareness, behavioral management, staff in-services/trainings, program development, and activity adaptation. We assess clients based on their abilities and suggest appropriate community-based programs. We partner with local City Special Olympics to integrate adaptive sports programs with client's and the community. Recommendations are provided on adaptations and materials needed for facilitation of programing within the facilities as well as in the community. This executive summary includes a review and evaluation of current facilities, services and program accessibility, physical and social inclusion within the classes and programs, and community events and activities to include persons with disabilities within the City of Brentwood Parks and Recreation Programs. Within this summary recommendations are provided to ensure inclusive practices are adopted and accommodations requested are satisfied to the best of the department's ability. Our goal is to ensure that the City of Brentwood Parks and Recreation comply with Civil Rights Title VI and ADA Title II laws and reasonably provide: translation, interpretation, modifications, accommodations, alternative

formats, auxiliary aids, and services to the community. It was a pleasure to work with the City of Brentwood on this project.

Need for Assessment: Evidence Based Practice

While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has been in effect since 1990, municipal parks and recreation programs continue to develop accessibility to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. Community parks and recreation departments across the country are currently working to address diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. Given the mission of many agencies to make communities better places to live, learn, work and play, park and recreation agencies are in a unique position to champion efforts that advance DEI. According to the National Recreation & Park Association 2021 DEI study findings, one in three parks and recreation departments across the country have established formalized DEI programming. However, the study indicated that only 40% of agencies are ensuring that all have access to enjoy agency's parks, facilities, and programming. While this may seem significant, this exemplifies that over half of municipal parks and recreation departments are not providing accessible and inclusive facilities and programs further supporting the need for this comprehensive assessment and executive summary for the City of Brentwood Parks and Recreation Department. The City of Brentwood established a master plan in 2019 which included addressing the needs for DEI focused programming. Therefore, the Request for Proposals (RFP) was established in 2020 and Moore Recreation Therapy & Consulting Inc. was selected to conduct this work.

Like culture, art, recreation, leisure, and sports activities play an essential role in healthy communities. A few of the noteworthy benefits of involvement include improving the health and

well-being of individuals, contributing to the empowerment of individuals, and promoting the development of inclusive communities. According to Welk & Blair (2000), active people are better protected against overweight and obese health risks, according to a review of 24 current articles evaluating health outcomes associated with physical activity and body composition. Obese individuals who were active also had a lower incidence of disease and mortality than did normal-weight men/ women who were sedentary (Welk & Blair, 2000).

Considering the mission of the City of Brentwood Parks and Recreation Department is to “Provide exceptional service to the citizens of Brentwood while implementing Brentwood’s vision and values as determined by the City Council and the community”, it is essential to provide adaptive recreation and inclusive programming to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities as well as creating preventative health and wellness initiatives to serve the larger community. While recreation, sports, and leisure participation have positive health and wellness outcomes due to programmatic offerings, in a study by Brownson et al., (2001), it was found that there was a positive correlation between environmental infrastructure (such as trails and recreation facilities and enjoyable scenery) and physical activity. The national study included 1,818 people, a majority of whom were low income. This provides support for our assessment to not only look at ways to increase programmatic inclusive practices but also physical access and environmental infrastructure. Exceeding the minimum accessibility standards for physical access to accommodate the widest spectrum of users and their various abilities is considered universal design. The city is currently providing programming and services reaching a wide range of individuals however, individuals with disabilities are an underserved population within the city who benefit from participation both from a health and wellness perspective as well as a

social aspect. In addition, within the scope of this program, preventative health and wellness initiatives would have an impact on all residents served by the city facilities and programs.

Scope of Assessment

The scope of this assessment included a comprehensive review of current programs, best practices, and facilities as they relate to serving individuals with disabilities. The executive summary will address the specific areas of accessibility of programs and facilities, current inclusivity, and best practices in programming as well as recommendation for future staffing, training, administrative processes, and programming to address the current deficits related to serving individuals with disabilities within the City of Brentwood Parks and Recreation Department.

Methodology of Assessment

The comprehensive assessment included multiple components: focus groups, review of administrative documents, observations of programs, website, facilities, staff training and equipment to ensure inclusive practices, accessibility as well as universal design. The first part of the assessment included physically walking and touring each City of Brentwood Parks and Recreation facility with an administrator. This tour included assessing physical access and barriers as well as the layout of each programmatic space. A thorough review of administrative documents included: registration processes, Parks Trails and Recreation Master Plan 2019, registration forms, staff training, and website review.

In addition to an assessment of the administrative documents, two separate focus groups were conducted to collect data: one with the programmatic staff with the City of Brentwood

Parks and Recreation Department including 16 participants, and the second with community partner programs that the city currently works directly with or who currently serve individuals with disabilities within the City of Brentwood including 14 participants. In addition to the focus groups a formal digital survey was sent out to all residents of the City of Brentwood through the Parks and Recreation Department with a total of 184 participants completing the survey.

Definitions

Accommodation: any change to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done that allows an individual with a disability to apply for a job, perform job functions, or enjoy equal access to benefits available to other individuals.

Adaptive Recreation: adaptive or accessible recreation, is a concept whereby people with disabilities are given the opportunity to participate in recreational activities.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: (ADHD) is a chronic condition including attention difficulty, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness. ADHD often begins in childhood and can persist into adulthood. It may contribute to low self-esteem, troubled relationships, and difficulty at school or work. Symptoms include limited attention and hyperactivity. Treatments include medication and talk therapy.

Americans with Disabilities Act: (ADA) became law in 1990. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national

origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications. The ADA is divided into five titles (or sections) that relate to different areas of public life.

Autism Spectrum Disorder: (ASD) is a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain.

Caregiver: a family member or paid helper who regularly looks after a child or a sick, elderly, or person with a disability.

Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist: (CTRS) is a professional who works to improve the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of sick or disabled individuals. A CTRS possesses certification by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC).

Disability: a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Diversity: understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences.

Emotional Support Animal: according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), an emotional support animal is any animal that provides emotional support alleviating one or more symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Emotional support animals provide companionship, relieve loneliness, and sometimes help with depression, anxiety, and certain phobias, but do not have special training to perform tasks that assist people with disabilities and does not have public access.

Equity: the state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial, and fair.

Inclusion: the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of other minority groups.

In Home Support Service (IHSS)- Caregiver funded by Alta Regional Center: program provides in-home assistance to eligible aged, blind and individuals with disabilities as an alternative to out-of-home care and enables recipients to remain safely in their own homes.

Intellectual Disability: (ID) a condition characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior that originates before the age of 22.

Mental Health: a person's condition regarding their psychological and emotional well-being.

Recreational Therapy: (RT) a systematic process that utilizes recreation and other activity-based interventions to address the assessed needs of individuals with illness and/or disabling conditions, as a means to psychological and physical health, recovery and well-being.

Regional Center: regional centers are nonprofit private corporations that have offices throughout California to provide a local resource to help find and access the many services available to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

Sensory Processing Disorder: (SPD) is a condition that affects how your brain processes sensory information (stimuli). Sensory information includes things you see, hear, smell, taste, or touch. SPD can affect all your senses, or just one. SPD usually means you're overly sensitive to stimuli that other people are not.

Service Animal: under Title II and Title III of the ADA, a service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability and has public access.

Therapeutic Recreation: (TR)the process utilized in the practice of recreational therapy

Therapy Animal/Comfort Animals: Both types of animals, typically dogs, work in situations where stress levels are high. Comfort animals work during active crises. They offer a calming distraction to those impacted in an active disaster or emergency. Therapy animals provide people with healing contact, typically in an institutional or clinical setting, to improve their physical, social, emotional, or cognitive functioning. While these types of animals receive extensive training and may interact with all sorts of people, including an individual with a disability, they are not trained to perform a specific task for an individual with a disability and do not have unlimited public access.

Universal Design: is the design of buildings, products, or environments to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability, or other factors.

Veteran: a military veteran is a person who is no longer serving in a military. A military veteran that has served directly in combat in a war is further defined as a war veteran.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This assessment identified current practices as well as deficits and areas for growth within the City of Brentwood Parks & Recreation Department. Current ADA standards and universal design practices were reviewed, however the lens from a CTRS's professional perspective will present the findings and recommendations.

Facilities

A tour of all City of Brentwood Parks & Recreation facilities was conducted. While this assessment did not include specific measurements for ADA compliance, the facilities were looked at using the lens of accessibility from a programmatic perspective. There were many aspects of the facilities that should be commended for best practices as well as accessibility. A few of these include open spaces within the programmatic rooms, evening and night lighting in facilities exceeded standards, all exterior doors to main facilities included automatic accessible door push opener and closers. When assessing all the facilities signage, it was identified that the signage was either not large enough print/font size or the contrast was not accessible as well as there was not braille throughout all facility signage.

BRENTWOOD SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER



The first facility assessed was the Brentwood Senior Activity Center (BSAC). The facility should be commended for the number of accessible parking spaces as well as the large entrance and accessible welcoming front counter. The entrance door included an automatic accessible door push opener and closer to enter and leave the building were present. Automatic accessible door push opener and closers to enter the bathrooms, the main hall, and the back patio were absent as the doors were heavy. The stage in the main hall does not have a ramp or lift to provide accessibility to the stage. On the back patio

one of three of the picnic tables were accessible and considering the facility is utilized by seniors this does not lend itself to provide ample accessible outdoor seating.

In the main activity room, there was not an accessible sink to be used for activities as well as sanitation. In the facility resource room with books, there is a CCTV which was donated to the center however the staff do not know how to use the piece of equipment nor is there directions for someone to access it independently.

RECOMMENDATION

- Review all facility signage font size, contrast as well as the addition of accessible signage.
- BSAC entrance of main hall installation of an automatic accessible door push opener and closer.
- BSAC installation of an automatic accessible door push opener and closer for each bathroom.
- BSAC installation of an automatic accessible door push opener and closer for back-patio door.
- BSAC in the main hall, installation of a lift or ramp to provide accessibility to the stage.
- BSAC installation of additional accessible outdoor picnic tables and seating.

In the main activity room, the installation of an accessible sink to be used for activities as well as sanitation would be an asset. In the facility resource room with books, there is a Closed Caption Television (CCTV) magnifier which was donated to the center, and we recommend all staff be trained on utilizing the piece of equipment. In addition, placing laminated directions attached to the equipment so that users can reference the instructions independently would be beneficial and increase the accessibility and overall use.

BRENTWOOD FAMILY AQUATIC COMPLEX



The next facility assessed was the Brentwood Family Aquatic Complex (BFAC). The facility should be commended for having pool lifts to access all areas of each pool as well as having a PVC pipe wheelchair for the zero-entry access to the pool. It was found that in the family bathroom as well as in the main locker rooms there was a lack of accessible changing spaces as the locker rooms had traditional 12” wide benches without a seat back. Programmatically, the facility offers a wide selection of swimming and aquatic programming. Providing specialized programs to meet the needs of various populations would enhance the current offerings. This would include training for staff to provide accommodations and specialized programs as well as the purchase of adaptive equipment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- BFAC installation of a universally designed large padded changing tables in all locker rooms as well as the family bathroom. This space would be used not only by individual users but by family members or caregivers who need additional space to support an individual.
- Providing program specific adaptive swimming and aquatic training to staff would enhance and expand the current programmatic offerings and allow for more inclusive programming to provide accommodations to individuals with disabilities in already existing programs.

- Annual BFAC staff training on safety and use of the pool lifts as well as the PVC pipe access chair.
- BFAC purchase of Adaptive aquatics equipment. Examples of adaptive programmatic equipment may include: aqua jogger belts, aquatic bar floats, floatation neck doodle, swim lesion floating and sinking toys, and aquatic floatation cuffs.

BRENTWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER



The Brentwood Community Center (BCC) was assessed as well.

The city should be commended for the current practices in accessibility. One of the factors which presents a welcoming environment is the low wheelchair accessible front counters for registration as well as the welcoming staff. In addition, the facility has an accessible wheelchair evacuation chair placed at the rear stairwell of the facility. At the entrance, the doors were heavy, however there was one automatic accessible door push opener and closer at the main entrance. Once you have entered the facility, to access the main ballroom as well as all bathrooms throughout the facility the doors are heavy and lack automatic accessible door push opener and closers. In the commercial kitchen, there lacked a working space for someone who uses a wheelchair to utilize the counter space, however the commercial kitchen included an accessible sink.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- BCC accessible automatic accessible door push opener and closers for restrooms and main hall/ballroom.

- BCC accessible countertop space for someone who utilizes a wheelchair to work in the kitchen.
- BCC space at the main front stairwell for an additional accessible wheelchair evacuation chair to meet the needs of multiple individuals for a safe and effective emergency evacuation.
- BCC in the main hall/ballroom installation of a lift or ramp to provide accessibility to the stage.

Programs



When assessing programs, all staff were prepared, organized, and friendly creating a positive and welcoming environment. When observed, almost all classes included one instructor with various participant to instructor ratios depending on the number of participants. When observed, most of the classes did not have a person with a visible disability participating. When a participant with disability was present, the parent assisted with focus and supported the individual behaviorally adapting when needed. The only program with multiple staff and volunteers which exclusively served individuals with disabilities was the Be Exceptional programs (which is a private company, not a program served by the City of Brentwood) and provided behavioral support for each participant as well as using the natural support of other participants when needed.

When conducting this assessment and communicating with the staff at the various classes, they were receptive to the conservation and willing to share information about their class

structure, organization, demographics of class participants, and trainings they have attended or would like to receive. This information will be reviewed and provided as feedback and recommendations in the following section.

We would like to commend the program supervisors for their forward thinking and collection of resources to use for behavioral modification in various children's program. It should be recognized that at the end of some program's children are provided with a reward such as a sticker or praise which is an appropriate and effective behavior technique. The staff informed us that this is used as a motivation and reward for participation. Program staff informed us that if a child has a behavioral challenge the parents are brought in to "deal" with the situation and provide the support necessary for the child to participate. These instructors primarily referred to situations with individuals with ASD and ADHD. They referenced situations when the behavior was not corrected, and they would have to ask the child to come back next time, or the instructor would work directly with their supervisor to identify a plan. As it relates to behavior, staff at the BCC informed us that there are "Safe Space" (tents) available for those needing areas and fidget objects for emotional support/calming specifically used in the outdoor camp programs. The camp staff were also provided with a backpack with a "Cool Down" document which describes how to work with someone who is experiencing a behavioral challenge. The staff were provided with these resources however they reported not having received formal training on how to execute the equipment or guidelines. While we were informed of these resources as an accommodation, the staff were unsure where they were and if it was really a great idea to put a child into a tent and how long one should stay in it. In addition, the staff were unable to identify how to find them if it was a necessary resource for a child or how it could be used as a reward or punishment.

Everything Sports by the Jump Bunch (an outside provider), staff informed us that they have had a few children with ADHD or ASD but the aids or parents automatically provided the one-on-one support for the individual to participate because they have not received any training on how to work with these populations. If the City will continue to contract with Jump Buch for programs, it is recommended that their staff be provided with support for accessibility, or the City could require that the contracted organization provide appropriate accommodations. In the Camp Brentwood program, staff informed us that they have had a few participants in the past with ASD or SPD. While staff were not trained specifically to “deal” with behaviors and any other issues that arise with the campers they were provided with a “Cool Down Backpack”. The staff said there is a policy in the handbook with a 3 strikes policy for behavior and participation. They said they usually talk with parents to get information necessary to have the child to participate but there is no additional information on the registration form or provided to them before the camp or program starts such as an assessment so that they can be prepared or ask questions before the first day.

While assessing special events, the city residents enjoy participating in the programs and appreciate the offerings during the holidays. The special events appear to be well attended by the community. We commend the use of closed caption for Movies in the Park. While there were no specific special events for individuals with disabilities or marketing related to accessibility, best practices should be acknowledged to inclusively serve the Brentwood community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- For special events, include more accessible parking.

- For special events provide an optional designated accessible seating area for ease of use, viewing and safety.
- For special events include accessible porta-potties as well as accessible hand washing stations for sanitation (not the foot pump hand washing stations as they are not universally designed).
- Provide a consistent practice and training for programmatic staff to mitigate and modify spaces and program when behavioral challenges arise. It is recommended that a policy and procedure be put into practice to include an accessible space or behavioral technique utilized to attend to the individual's behaviors safely and appropriately. Examples of this could include: breathing techniques, quiet spaces, sensory objects for manipulation, a behavior contract, reward systems, and/or time/out time/in activities.

The Be Exceptional Program, which is a rental group provides a monthly social event, and weekly drama, and exercise class. This class is a specialized class for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Parents and caregivers can volunteer their time to provide individual support to participants during programs. The program is led by two instructors who adapt the program as needed and the participants naturally provide support for one another in a buddy system. They do not utilize any specific adaptive equipment however this would enhance access to various activities if available. The staff let us know that their program is not regularly publicized in the quarterly City of Brentwood Activity Guide, so it is also populated via word of mouth. While this is a rental group, families and caregivers associate the program as a City of Brentwood's program.

In support of providing specialized and inclusive programming within the current and future programs the following recommendations will support the future work of the CTRS and the program offerings within the Adaptive & Therapeutic Recreation Resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consistently list inclusive and adaptive programs such as The Be Exceptional Program and any other inclusive/specialized program under the new section on the website and activity guide titled Adaptive & Therapeutic Recreation Resources.
- For all contracted or rental programs, if advertised in the City of Brentwood's marketing materials, the programs must provide accommodations and work directly with the city's Adaptive & Therapeutic Recreation Program as a city sponsored program.
- Allow the expansion of The Be Exceptional Program to increase offerings as well as age groups served in the future. When speaking with parents after the program a few requested additional programs such as: cooking, creative arts, recreation based social skills, sports, and computer. Most of the parents stated that they did not want their children to participate with their typical peers in an inclusive program but preferred the format of the Be Exceptional where the individuals with disabilities are participating with their peers with similar needs continuing with a segregated specialized program.
- Expand adaptive programs providing segregated specialized programs as well as continue to offer opportunities to various populations and age groups.
- Provide inclusive and specialized adaptive and therapeutic recreation programs where staff are fully trained and feel comfortable with adapting to the various needs of various populations. In addition, having additional staff to assist within the class and provide one-on-one support when necessary.

- Hire a CTRS to supervise the overall programming to make sure appropriate assessments and accommodations are implemented and provided.
- Have the CTRS provide training and development for staff to increase their knowledge and skills to implement programs and services to individuals with various abilities.
- Have the CTRS collaborate and partner with Brentwood Unified Schools to connect with individuals with disabilities as well as promote volunteer opportunities for high school students.
- Have the CTRS create an internship program where RT students can complete their academic requirements to become a CTRS after graduation.

In addition to specialized and inclusive programming practices, within the scope of practice of a CTRS includes health and wellness programming. Providing preventative health and wellness programming such as the ParksRx National Program would attract individuals of all ages and abilities to promote health and wellness practices. This would utilize outdoor park spaces and indoor community facility spaces to attract those with already existing health conditions as well as create a health and wellness platform to increase the concept of “Healthy Parks Make Healthy People”. This slogan or one similar could create a new partnership with the medical community within the city and increase the use of public spaces for preventative health and wellness initiatives. Many cities across the country have initiated this type of programming and the research available supports the benefits to both the residents and the community related to healthy lifestyle choices and community engagement. Below we will provide recommendations in the various programmatic age groups as well as specific program areas.

Considering city resident school age children in the assessment assists in identifying a need especially within the California Department of Education Special Education Services. According to the California Department of Education Data Quest, (2018-2019) there are 1,366 individuals receiving special education services in the Brentwood Union School District. While this number is low based on the many students that are undiagnosed or do not need accommodations inside the classroom, this specifically identifies a significant need of a population that could benefit from recreation, leisure, and sports participation within the City of Brentwood Parks & Recreation Program. These programs could be specialized for specific populations or inclusive in nature providing opportunities for all to participate regardless of their disability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To meet the needs of school aged children additional programming could include: adaptive swimming lessons, recreationally based social skills programs, streamlined assessment and accommodation practices for camps and all programming, specialized wheelchair sports, and inclusive and specialized sports programming for various populations.

In addition to the school age population, according to the US Census 2019, there are 3,486 Veterans who reside in the City of Brentwood. This is a large population of individuals who may or may not currently participate in programming or utilize facilities and services within the city. The CTRS may create specialized and inclusive programs that are welcoming and accommodating to the specific needs of veterans and their families will broaden the scope of practice and services available better meeting the unique needs of those who reside in Brentwood. In addition, the 2019 Census broke down the population of those who disclosed

having a disability. This population was identified as 7.6% (4,900 persons) of the entire population of Brentwood 64,474. This is consistent with the national averages for this population and again lends itself to an opportunity to reach a population that may not currently utilize facilities or programs through the City of Brentwood Parks & Recreation Department. This population could include the aging who currently utilized the services at the senior center. In addition to specialized and inclusive programming, preventative health and wellness initiatives such as the “ParksRx” program which is a national initiative providing services and programs to create healthier communities. Expanding programmatic offerings and access to serve all residents within the City of Brentwood would positively impact all populations supporting the continued need for this assessment.



Preschool (ages 0-4): When assessed, the children are engaged and actively participating. The staff provide kinesthetic learning opportunities and provide consistent verbal praise. Some of the feedback from both the staff and parents included having a lack of “after work” hour classes as well as weekend programming availability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Preschool (ages 0-4) area includes an increase in parent/caregiver and me classes.
- Create sensory play classes to programming for this population as appropriate sensory stimulation positively affects the developmental stages as children grow and learn.

- Increasing class offerings in the evening as well as on the weekends would increase opportunities for community members to engage in programming outside of the “workday” times.
- Create additional tumbling, gymnastics, and creative arts classes for all abilities would increase opportunities and the inclusion of all populations to provide access to physical and social programs.

Youth (ages 5-12): In this age group, the classes were well organized, and the instructors communicated clearly and effectively with the participants. The program staff provided verbal praise as well as “high fives” as a motivation and behavioral reward. The staff spoke of enjoying their work and requesting to have additional training when more participants with disabilities begin to participate in the classes. The staff stated that they occasionally have a participant with ADHD or ASD and the parents would step in to provide the one-on-one support. We commend the program instructors for their work in adapting to the needs of the various participants. When provided with goals from their program supervisors, instructors identified that they created lesson plans and enjoy executing the delivery of programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The CTRS may provide training on activity analysis to create accessibility and modifications to equipment and activities.
- Provide participant rosters to staff at least one week prior to the start of a new class including assessments of individuals with disabilities so the staff may initiate communication with the individual, family or caregiver before the program begins.
- Provide training related to behavior analysis and modifications for program staff.

Teens (ages 13-17): The assessment primarily included sports programming and camps.

Consistent recommendations from the other age groups include: staff training, behavior modifications, and accessibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide additional programs on nights and weekends as well as additional social programs.
- Create additional programming: cooking, home mechanics, and social skills programming as a request based on the deficits and current needs of their children.
- Create a volunteer and counselor in training (CIT) program where high school students may support senior programs and the Adaptive & Therapeutic Recreation Programs to increase leadership activities for teens to gain “volunteer and work” experiences.



Adults (ages 18+): Participants were actively engaged and appeared to enjoy the programming especially within sports leagues as well as the special programs such as the holiday parade and tree lighting. The

adult’s sports leagues were well attended and organized. The staff were engaged and organizing the program implementation. It was observed that there were no individuals with visible disabilities participating inclusively in any of the current city sports programs. The specialized programs provided by Be Exceptional, a community rental, included all the specialized engagement for individuals in this age range to participate in exercise and drama weekly. There were not any program offerings in the areas of adaptive sports or inclusive programming.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement organized hikes and outdoor adventure.
- Create more evening and weekend program options as it relates to creative arts.

- Develop adaptive and therapeutic recreation programs that complement and increase opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- Provide facility rental space for the Be Exceptional program to develop and expand. In addition to providing more rental opportunity for Be Exceptional, having the CTRS offer inclusive and specialized programmatic opportunities would increase the engagement of various populations. This would include consistent additional days of program, times, weekend availability, and the expansion of program offerings.



Adults (50 & better): The Senior Center programs assessed were implemented primarily by seniors themselves, they get together and dance, socialize, arts& crafts, play various board and card games, etc. When observing programs, the participants present extremely engaged and spoke only positively about the programming. Staff were only present for meals and creative arts group and to welcome participants when they enter the facility. Staff in the creative arts activities stated needing additional staffing and training to assist with participants who exhibit cognitive delays or have physical disabilities. Before COVID-19 there were volunteers from the area high school, but the program is no longer available. The staff stated that the participants tend to form natural support systems within one another to create access. Current programs are primarily meeting the social needs of the participants however cognitive and physical engagement are not addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop active and more passive recreational and leisure programming including cognitive and physical engagement.
- Increase opportunities for weekend programming and evening programming.
- Provide programming for this population throughout the summer to provide social engagement and increase physical activity opportunities.
- Develop and implement staff training with topics related to physical disabilities and mobility devices as well as providing accommodations for individuals who are blind or have a hearing impairment.
- Develop and implement staff training related to cognitive impairments including brain injuries, dementia, as well as fall prevention.
- Develop and implement senior sports activities and leagues, adaptive sports programs, senior Olympics, basketball, a bowling league, softball.
- Partner or develop convenient and timely transportation needed for all programs and the potential to collaborate with dial a ride.
- Provide magnification and lighted workstations for individual with visual impairments to participate in activities inclusively (creative arts, cards, bingo).

FINDINGS & DATA COLLECTION

Staff Focus Group

This focus group provided an opportunity for staff to share their insights and voice their opinions about current processes and programs and advocate for their current and future needs. Staff were concerned about providing safe environments and program options without the proper

training. They discussed the registration process and lack of information they receive on the rosters before programs start to ensure participants receive appropriate accommodations and that staff are prepared. This concern included health information such as allergies, medications and any disability accommodations that may create an unsafe situation for both the instructor and the participant.

In addition to the registration process, staff were concerned with their lack of training related to specific populations including: ASD, SPD, dementia, intellectual/developmental disability, brain injury, blindness, hearing impairment, and various physical disabilities. These concerns included first understanding the presentation of various disabilities in addition to how to modify equipment, programs, and activities to meet the needs of various populations. Multiple staff voiced a desire to have training on behavior planning and modifications to serve individuals with ASD, SPD, and ADHD. In addition to disability specific training, staff requested training related to learning about various pieces of adaptive equipment that could be purchased by the city to provide accommodations or create new adaptive sports and recreation programs to serve a more diverse population. They also wanted to receive training on activity analysis and how to modify activities to meet the various physical and behavioral needs of different populations. The staff were concerned about the participant to staff ratios if individuals with disabilities were included in programs as the current model does not include additional staff but requires family members or care givers to provide the one-on-one support for the individual to participate. Overall, the staff were very happy with their current positions and felt encouragement knowing that the city was allocating resources to conduct this assessment and hear and hopefully address their current and future needs.

Community Agency Focus Group

This focus group was comprised of community members and leaders of various groups throughout the area who serve individuals with disabilities. The group was very diverse and eager to initiate future partnerships. The current programs throughout the city and outlying area were receptive to provide feedback of current successes and challenges. The group provided basic information about their programs and populations served. They provided ideas for future collaboration and program needs based on their current experiences both in the schools and community agencies representing all age groups. There were various groups representing programs that serve primarily individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These staff were advocates for their populations served and for the community. There were two programs in attendance with current collaborations with the city. This led to dynamic conversations about potential areas for growth and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create and implement additional programming in adaptive sports, social skills, activities of daily living, home mechanics, physical fitness, and creative arts. While some groups requested specialized programs for specific populations i.e. (programs exclusively for individuals with ASD or ADHD), others preferred new and innovative inclusive programs where the individuals with disabilities will participate with their typical peers with adaptations and modifications to the current programs already offered within the City of Brentwood's Activity Guide. Both requests are within the scope of the future Adaptive & Therapeutic Recreation program offerings when there is appropriately training for staff and accessible equipment and resources.

- Provide weekend, evening, summer programs, and special events serving individuals with disabilities.

Community Participant Survey

The survey was created by Moore Recreation Therapy & Consulting Inc. and was reviewed by the city staff and approved for distribution. The survey included questions related to program needs, accessibility, accommodations, staffing, and community participant suggestions. While minimal demographics were collected, we have compiled a review of the findings below. The community participant survey was sent out to all members of the community by the City of Brentwood Parks & Recreation staff. There were 184 completed surveys. 48 of the respondents (26%) of the survey disclosed as having a disability. The average age of individuals who disclosed having a disability was 51 years old.

Below we provide a graph with the demographic data related to the area of disability:

Specific Disability Disclosed:	Percentage of individuals with the given disability from the 184 completed surveys:	Average age of respondent with the given disability:
Physical Disability	23%	87
Intellectual/Developmental Disability	15%	24
Autism Spectrum Disorder or Sensory Processing Disorder	43%	13
Blind	2%	19
Hearing Impairment	6%	81
Unknown or did not disclose	11%	56

One of the things we did not ask in the survey was if individuals were military veterans. Given the large veteran population in the City of Brentwood, which was collected by the census, this information may have been able to provide additional evidence that veteran specific or focused programming may have been an appropriate addition to current programs offered or additional future programs through the Adaptive & Therapeutic Recreation Services and guided age-related variables.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide additional training for staff and programming related to specific populations. The (50+ and better) population is one demographic which the city should focus future resources related to programming and staff training. As the average participant that completed the survey was 51, this group clearly is invested and interested in providing feedback to the city based on their interests and needs.
- Develop population specific programming directed to serving individuals with ASD or SPD as this was a significant percentage of the populations represented. This population included respondents age ranges from 3 to 39 years of age.
- Review below participant feedback and identify which recommendations would be viable to add in the current or future fiscal years as well as evaluate current programs and practices for safety and accessibility.

Participants of the survey provided the following recommendations and feedback: The recommendations below include data directly collected from the survey. This does not include recommendations from Moore Recreation Therapy & Consulting Inc.

More open spaces	More sensory programs	Add pickle ball	Add swimming lessons for adults
Add basic needs classes: cooking, sewing	Add Pinterest craft classes	Add gardening classes for 50+	Add salsa dancing classes
Add computer classes for the 50+	Add social and cultural gatherings	Add therapeutic water exercise classes	Add chair exercise classes 50+
Add year-round aquatics programs	Add Latino focused 50+ programs	Add a place in registration to ask for an accommodation	Need staff training to accommodate kids with disabilities
Add programs specific for children with Downs Syndrome	Increase inclusivity on website (Spanish), culture, age, low-income options	Add parent and me classes on weekends and evenings	Add more concerts in the park
Add arthritis exercise classes (PACE)	Add horseshoes	Add camps for kids with ASD and SPD	Add more day trips for 50+
Add inclusive transgender and non-binary youth and adult sports	Need Epi pen and allergy training for staff	Need staff training for ASD, SPD, ADD and ADHD	Need staff training for dementia
Add adult and disability self-defense classes	Need private swim instructors who know how to work with individuals with disabilities	Add light of the fields at night for safety so the community can access them: Oak Meadow Park	Add specialized programs for kids and teens with disabilities
Lack of transportation to facilities	Lack accommodations for the blind and for a service dog	Medical considerations for the 50+	Need cost effectiveness for 50+ programs when on a fixed income

As identified in the table above, participant recommendations include various additions to program offerings, staff training, safety protocol, facility recommendations, marketing, and website recommendations as well as administrative/registration process improvements.

The assessment clearly identifies the needs and recommendations of a select population of the City of Brentwood’s community who completed the survey.

Staff Training & Development

In the BCC, it is recommended that all staff both facility and programmatic be provided with training on using the stairway evacuation wheelchair which is kept in the main stairway in the back of the facility. This training should be one component of new-hire training as well as reviewed annually to ensure safety practices and accessibility for all. After having a discussion with a few programs specific staff, they requested training in the following areas: emotional and physical disability training, how to adapt activities to fit the need for a child with a disability, how to speak with someone appropriately using person first language and attaining and learning how to use adaptive equipment to assist individuals with physical disabilities.

From this assessment, it is recommended that all camp and program staff be provided with training as it relates to disability awareness and sensitivity. In addition, it is recommended that content include behavior modifications and planning, activity analysis and modifications as well as an introduction to adaptive equipment and modifications to meet the needs of multiple populations. This training would also include safety training and understanding their roles and responsibilities when providing services to various populations with disabilities. This would also include assessment registration documents and training for working with the (50+ and better) population.

The following trainings and schedule recommendations are provided below:

New Hire Orientation	Quarterly Training	Annual Training
Safety practices and accessibility	Behavioral modification and quiet space	Person first language and effective communication
Disability awareness & sensitivity (service animals)	Accommodations and adaptations of program	Activity analysis and programmatic modifications

Accommodations and adaptations of program	Seasonal program modifications	Adaptive equipment and modifications
Inclusive Policies & Procedures	Value and benefits of inclusion	Confidentiality
Emergency Procedures: disability specific and stairwell evacuation chair	Policies & Scenarios (what would you do)	Inclusive Policies & Procedures

Marketing & Administrative Practices

After completing the assessment, the city should be commended for providing many accessible practice and services to the community. The website has been modified since the inception of the assessment and has created clear categories and a more user-friendly look and categories on the main page for ease of navigation and use. The participants were vocal about their appreciation for providing alternative means for enrolling in programs (i.e. walk-in to front desk or calling in). In addition, the forms provided for enrollment are clear and well organized. Participants appreciate the one-page seasonal special event and programmatic flyers to advertise and market programs. Participants spoke highly about how friendly and helpful the front desk staff were at all facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Include accommodation needs and medical/health information for the safety of its participants in the registration documents. This would include medication lists, especially for camps and senior programs where children or seniors are with staff for multiple hours in a day and health concerns arise. In addition, the accommodation list

should include information about any behavior modifications and physical needs of the individual. This would provide staff the appropriate information to contact the individual or families before the start of the program to make sure they have all the necessary training, staffing, equipment, and accommodations ready for the first day of programming.

- Provide staff with participant rosters with the accommodation requests at least one week before the program begins.
- Provide one-on-one support staff for an individual in a program as a reasonable accommodation required by the ADA.
- Create a policy for participation behavior expectations and a behavior contract which may be signed by all families, care givers and/or participants so that expectations are clear and provided before the individuals participation in programs.
- Provide closed captioning at all public meetings to increase inclusivity of all attendees.
- Provide sign language interpreter as a best practice. However, when requested by a participant, providing a certified sign language interpreter meets the ADA.
- Create language on marketing materials to include: participants must notify the department at least 72 hours prior to the event or program if sign language interpretation is needed as an accommodation.
- Create and implement an assessment and new registration documents and training for working with the (50+ and better) population. Currently if someone in the (50+ and better) population needs assistance to participate in a program they must bring their own care giver or family member to support their participation.

- Provide staff with additional programmatic training on modifications and accommodations necessary to support the one-on-one needs of participants to comply with the ADA.
- Create and implement policies and procedures related to working with individuals with disabilities to create accountability, consistency, and safety standards. Examples of this could include: inclusion policy, policy goals, staff training policies, organizational support, environmental support, and continuous measure and improvement.
- Create and publicize an inclusive or accessibility statement on the front page of the website to market and provide education for participants to identify and then gain all the resources related to the topic.
- On the main website homepage create a button for contacting the Adaptive & Therapeutic Recreation Supervisor to initiate an assessment or request accommodations, review contrast and font size accessibility requirements, and provide welcoming and inclusive language for each program description to include individuals of all abilities. Increase the use of photos of individuals with disabilities or other diverse populations in marketing materials. As an example, within the description of classes, the word inclusive practices or request an accommodation should be in the language.

Partnerships & Collaborations

This assessment identified the relationship the City of Brentwood Parks & Recreation Department maintains with various community service providers of contracted programs and services. While conducting our assessments we met with various staff program instructors as well as those who contract services with the city. The partnerships provide a mutually beneficial relationship for both parties however the instructors would like to receive more information

during the registration process to better serve the participants. The contracted instructors identified a need for training related to accessibility, disability awareness, equipment and program modifications and behavior training. After conducting the community focus group, we met with a few groups that currently work/collaborate with the city as a contracted service provider as well as several other organizations that would like to get involved in the future. Be Exceptional currently provides services however they would like to expand their programs to include different age groups as well as various program offerings and to serve additional populations. Working Wonders is another community organization that currently does not collaborate with the city however they are interested in establishing a working relationship in the future to increase the opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the community.

While budgetary constraints may be a current challenge within the department, there are multiple ways to generate funds to supplement resources. Seeking grants from foundations, seeking donations from local organizations or private residents, and government grants are a few avenues to attain funds to support programs. As an example, one organization that provides adaptive cycles to children under the age of 18 is Athletes Helping Athletes.

<https://www.roadrunnersports.com/rrs/content/content.jsp?contentId=2400098>

This would create a functional partnership with an organization to support an adaptive cycling program for youth. AMBUCS is another organization specific to adaptive cycling that has a grants program. <https://ambucs.org/> They are willing to provide adaptive cycling clinics or partner with an organization to create programming in a given community. This is one example of a specialized adaptive sports program with resources for both equipment and funds.

Adaptive & Therapeutic Recreation Resources

In the area of Adaptive & Therapeutic Recreation Resources, the assessment lead to needs in the area of program development, staff training, staff hiring, equipment purchasing, and training on equipment and other modifications. As an example of a programmatic recommendation within a specific area, in the aquatics programs, it is recommended that a policy be created to ensure the safety of participants of staff and patron when providing transferring assistance. It is recommended that programmatic staff who work with populations who will utilize the lifts have programmatic specific training to support an individual to transfer and access the pool/program. Depending on the departments risk management, it is either recommend that lifeguards support but not provide the transfer for an individual or provide a transfer based on appropriate standardized training.

After conducting this assessment, it is recommended that the City of Brentwood hire a full-time recreational therapist (CTRS) to supervise and administer the Adaptive & Therapeutic Recreation Programs and Services. The benefits of having this specialized staff member would not only expand and enhance program offerings but also provide someone to assess participants, provide individualized adaptive modifications as well as create programs and policies associated with serving individuals with disabilities and support staff in all areas. The CTRS would have the ability to develop and implement ongoing staff training and establish administrative practices to meet the needs of the City of Brentwood Parks & Recreation Department in serving diverse populations. In addition, having this professional expertise will allow the city to serve a greater and more diverse population creating specialized and inclusive programs to meet the needs of the residents of the City of Brentwood.

The CTRS would establish and develop relationship with community partners to increase participation and collaborative opportunities. Creating a volunteer program for teens as well as creating relationships with local colleges would enhance learning opportunities and support leadership development and program needs. The CTRS could provide direct supervisor for a student who is studying to become a CTRS. As a recreational therapy student, the culminating experience in acquiring a degree is a 560-hour internship. This internship could be housed under this program and provide the opportunity for at least one student throughout the year on a semester basis to complete their academic requirements. This will contribute to the success of the program in attaining the latest trends that academic institutions are providing to students as it relates to evidence-based practice in the field of recreational therapy. The CTRS would also be able to provide best practices, assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation in all areas of programs in addition to the inclusive and specialized therapeutic recreation programs.

SUMMARY

The City of Brentwood should be commended for their commitment to the need for this assessment. While budgetary concerns are at the heart of municipal parks and recreation programs, addressing the needs of a specialized group which includes military veterans, the aging and individuals with disabilities, making this assessment and then a strategic plan for moving forward should be celebrated. With the addition of a CTRS to the staff of the City of Brentwood Parks & Recreation Department, specialized and inclusive programs and services addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities as well as preventative health and wellness programs serving the larger Brentwood population will address the current health and wellness needs of the community. Having this charge within the cities strategic plan exemplifies the cities

commitment to serve its citizens and continue as a model of excellence within municipal parks and recreation in the state of California. As the City of Brentwood takes on this endeavor it is the recommendation that Moore Recreation Therapy & Consulting Inc. provide ongoing contractual support to ensure a productive and fluid transition in service, programs, trainings, and the hiring of a CTRS.



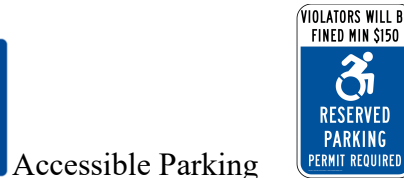
REFERENCES:

Miller, K., Schleien, S., & Lausier, J. (2009). Search for best practices in inclusive recreation: Programmatic findings. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 43(1), 27-41.

Parks Rx Program - <https://www.parkrx.org/>

PURCHASING & ESTIMATED BUDGET:

- Updated ADA signage:



- Accessible automatic door open and closed button



- Accessible picnic tables



- Accessible lift for stage



- Accessible changing table for locker rooms



- Adaptive Aquatic Exercise Equipment: Exercise floatation belt



- Accessible wheelchair stairwell evacuation chair



- Accessible kitchen counter working station



- Sensory stimulation mat



- Weighted Gel Pad



- Wrist ribbon



- Small puffer ring



- Fidget spinners



- Adaptive scissors



- Jumbo paint brushes



- Colours Multi-sports wheelchairs



- Full Page Illuminated Desktop Magnifier



Item	Number	Cost	Total
ADA restroom signage	20	\$28.00	\$560.00
Exit route signage	20	\$23.00	\$460.00
Accessible signage	20	\$17.70	\$354.00
Accessible automatic door open and closer	12	\$5,000.00	\$60,000.00
Accessible picknick tables	4	\$1423.88	\$5,695.52
Accessible lift for stage	2	\$8495.00	\$16,990.00
Accessible changing table	3	\$7335.00	\$22,005.00
Adaptive water exercise belt	50	\$52.95	\$2,647.50
Accessible wheelchair stairwell evacuation chair	1	\$3325.42	\$3325.42
Accessible kitchen counter work station	1	\$695.99	\$695.99
Sensory stimulation mat	10	\$28.83	\$288.30
Weighted gel lap pad	10	\$40.94	\$409.40
Wrist ribbons	20	\$30.44	\$608.80
Small puffer rings	2	\$41.19	\$82.38
Fidget spinners	10	\$9.95	\$99.50
Adaptive scissors	10	\$9.95	\$99.50
Melissa & Doug Jumbo Paint Brushes	10	\$7.49	\$74.90
Colours in Motion Multi-sports wheelchair	25	\$3,799.00	\$94,975.00
Full Page Illuminated Desktop Magnifier	10	\$99.95	\$999.50
Hiring of a CTRS staff member	1	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00
		TOTAL:	\$285,370.71

This estimated budget is based on minimal purchasing related to adaptive programming equipment and emphasizes facility modifications and the hiring of one CTRS to begin the assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the Adaptive & Therapeutic Recreation Programming.

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

1. ENSURE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES STRATEGICALLY INCLUDE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Brentwood's Parks & Recreation agency policies and procedures will include inclusive language and clearly state that parks and recreation programs, facilities and services are available to people of all abilities.

2. INVOLVE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

Diverse populations including individuals with various disabilities will have representation on various city boards and will be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of the City of Brentwood's Parks & Recreation programs, facilities, park improvement projects, and other services.

3. PROMOTE PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY

The City of Brentwood's Park and Recreation programs, facilities, special events, and services will be accessible to people of all abilities. The physical environment, program/class structure, communication methods and social components will be accessible for people with disabilities to participate fully and successfully.



4. PROVIDE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS WITH DISABILITIES

The City of Brentwood's Parks & Recreation programs, facilities, special events and services will address the individual needs of participants with disabilities. These accommodations will be addressed in a respectful and strategic manner.

5. TARGET OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The City of Brentwood's Parks & Recreation Department will use inclusive language and imagery, a variety of dissemination methods such as video and audio and consider partnering with organizations with similar values and visions when devising program outreach materials as needed.

6. ACCOUNT FOR COST CONSIDERATIONS AND FEASIBILITY

The City of Brentwood's Parks & Recreation Department will address potential fiscal implications of inclusive practices including: staffing, ongoing training, adaptive equipment, and additional resources needed to create, promote and sustain successful inclusive practices and specialized programming.

7. IMPLEMENT PROCESS EVALUATION AND PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

The City of Brentwood's Parks & Recreation programs, special events, facilities, and services will implement a process for effective evaluation that includes feedback from participants with disabilities and family members, personal assistants, caregivers, or other representatives. Feedback and additional accommodations will be reviewed and strongly considered in the future development and implementation for all programming.

8. EVALUATE OUTCOMES

The City of Brentwood's Parks & Recreation Department will collect data on outcomes attributed to inclusive practices within programs, facilities, special events and services that benefit community members. As part of this data collection, an ongoing community focus group of persons with disabilities and their representatives will meet annually to discuss and review the accessibility and inclusion of individuals with disabilities within programs and facilities.

Tips to Increase Usability & Accessibility

1. Person first language

People with disabilities are people first.

Humans vary in many ways, from physical appearance to personality. One way we vary is our ability level. Each individual has a unique personality, strengths, and abilities. Focusing on what people can do instead of what they can't do is important. In current practice, many organizations are in fact, dropping the "dis" and focusing instead on ability of individuals.

People are people first. Our variations make us unique from each other, but also make our individual needs different. These differences are not cause for exclusion but are factors to consider as we plan and deliver recreation experiences.

Person-first philosophy is a way of thinking about people's abilities first and foremost. Never assume you know about a person with a disability based on a label or diagnosis. Find out what a person's abilities are and use them to facilitate full inclusion in recreation. Avoid labels, discover abilities! This can be done through an assessment as well as appropriate registration forms that collect necessary accommodation requests.

Person-first language is a respectful, sensitive, and the accurate way to write and talk about people with disabilities. In person-first language, the person is first, then the disability. In oral and written communication, a recreation agency that embraces inclusive practices will use person-first language and train all staff to do so as well.

The word HANDICAPPED is outdated and disrespectful of people's abilities.



2. Communicate clearly: use clear language and alternative forms of communication

Use alternative forms of communication: Communication needs can be met in a wide variety of ways, from providing alternative forms of communication to assistive listening devices to apps on a smart phone that facilitate interaction. The key is to let the public know what forms of communication you have available, how they can be accessed or arranged, and an openness to explore new ways to communicate.



- Use clear and concise language: Clear and concise language is communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it. Written material is in clear and concise language so that your audience can:
 - Find what they need.
 - Understand what they find; and
 - Use what they find to meet their needs. There are many writing techniques that can help you achieve this goal.
- Ensure accessible signage: signs should be clear with large, accessible contrast, raised lettering, braille, and pictorial information, including the universal symbol of accessibility. Ensure signs are mounted at a height and angle so they are readable by all people.

Clear Language Writing Techniques

- Use clear and simple text (plain English) with short sentences, simple punctuation, and no jargon.

- Use larger print (at least 12 point), a clear typeface and plenty of spacing.
- Use bullet points or story boxes and fact boxes to make the main points clear.
- Use images such as photos, drawings, or symbols to support your text.
- Aim to make the subject of your material clear, even to a non- reader.
- Choose one or two simple, pictorial symbols and put them to the side of the words.
- Make sure there is appropriate contrast between type and paper.

3. **Make sure everyone feels welcomed and is invited**



Inclusive practices in your marketing and outreach will increase accessibility of materials. Take a critical look at your marketing materials - they should include images of people with disabilities and other diverse populations playing alongside one another.

The materials should let people with disabilities and their families know what programs and services you have available. On your website, have an easily found page that provides detailed information about physical access, safety guidelines, available adaptive equipment, availability of quiet spaces, policies you have that facilitate participation, an invitation to call ahead for individual consultation and accommodations, and other information you feel will help people enjoy your entities to the fullest.

Appoint a CTRS as your point person to create a streamlined approach for communication with the public about assessments and accommodations is essential. This professional will have the expertise and a positive attitude to be the point of contact for inclusive practices and accessibility to facilitate communication and proactive problem-solving, as well as advocate for improved services.

Website accessibility: ensure your website is usable by all people and meets guidelines for accessibility by the ADA.

Inclusive Practices and Therapeutic Recreation Point of Contact (CTRS)

- **A One-Stop Shop:** Having a CTRS as your point of contact provides a single person for individuals who need accommodations to access facilities, services, or programs. Identifying the contact person in public notices and publications allows individuals with disabilities to contact one person with the knowledge and responsibility to handle assessments and accommodation requests.
- **Information Dissemination:** The CTRS serves as a central resource on disability issues for the agency. The CTRS should be familiar with the agency's responsibilities under the law and should have access to the resources needed to respond to inquiries, assessments, and accommodation requests.
- **Effective Communication:** The CTRS knows how to access auxiliary aids and services to promote effective communication.
- **Support:** The CTRS provides training and technical assistance for employees in responding to requests for assessments, accommodation, instructs employees on disability awareness issues, and takes a leadership role in ensuring the agency embraces inclusive practices and is welcoming to all.

Website Accessibility Checklist

- Provide a translator so that the website can be accessed by diverse populations in multiple languages
- Uses headings, list, and consistent structure throughout the site. As you move through page-to-page on the site, the banner and navigation bar stay the same. Navigation should be clear and consistent.
- Clean Visual Layout: the website is clear of clutter, uses ample white space, and high contrast.
- Images, graphs, charts, tables, and animations used alt text: Uses the "alt" attributes to describe the function of each picture, graphic, or visual. When the mouse rolls over the picture or graphic, the text description is displayed.
- Links: use text that makes sense when read out of context for links. Avoids "click here" as it provides no information about the link.
- No flickering words or images, no unnecessary sounds, or animations: may induce seizures in some users: highly distracting for users with learning or attention differences.
- Information for access features is provided: Example [accessibility information](#)
- Multimedia provides captioning and/or transcripts for audio content and descriptions of video.
- The Website Has Been Checked: the website indicates that it has been validated by one of the many online accessibility tools. One example is WAVE, available at <http://wave.webaim.org/>.

4. Create a clear and accessible path

A clear path of travel ensures that people of all sizes and abilities can approach, enter, and use your recreation sites and facilities. The route of travel should be unobstructed, well-lit, have a firm and stable surface, be wide enough, and have a gradual incline usable by all people.

Parking is an important aspect of a clear path of travel. Accessible parking includes designated signs, spaces that are 96 inches wide, access aisles for wheelchair lifts on vehicles, a reasonable distance from the entrance, and a continuous route of travel including curb cuts and ramps if needed.

Entrances also make up part of the clear path of travel. Entrances should be clearly marked as accessible, be wide enough, open easily (e.g., light weight or automatic, handles that are usable without grasping), and have a level ramp landing area that is large enough for wheelchair maneuvering.

Ask yourself, “Can all people approach, enter, and use this recreation site? How clear is the path of travel?”

Checklist for a Clear Path of Travel

- Unobstructed: there are no barriers in the route of travel, and it can be used by a person using a wheelchair or by persons with other disabilities.
- Wide enough: most of the path of travel should ideally be 60 inches wide so that people can pass each other comfortably
- Firm: it should not noticeably compress with the passage of a device or give way under foot.
- Stable: for the route of travel to be stable, the surface does not shift from side to side and endures a typically weather condition. The surface retains its original condition.
- Well lit: the lighting along a route of travel should be bright enough to sufficiently navigate the area



5. Know your business: policies about inclusive practices and access are developed and shared

Policies and procedures, developed to address access and inclusion, are clearly written, and shared in staff training.



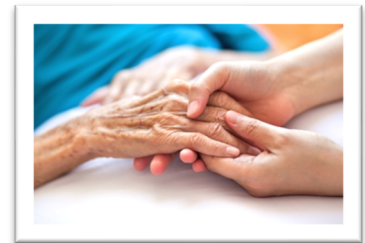
Service Animals

The ADA defines a “service animal” as any dog (or miniature horse) that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Other animals and dogs that are not trained to assist with a disability or who merely provide emotional support are excluded from this definition. The rule also clarifies that individuals with mental disabilities who use service animals that are trained to perform a specific task are protected by the ADA.

To determine if an animal is a service animal, a public entity or a private business may ask two questions: 1) Is this animal required because of a disability? 2) What work or task has this animal been trained to perform? A public entity or private business may not ask about the nature or extent of an individual’s disability. It also may not require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal, or require the animal to wear an identifying vest.

Wheelchairs and Other Assistive Mobility Devices

The ADA adopts a two-tiered approach to mobility devices, distinguishing between wheelchairs and “other power-driven mobility devices,” which include a range of devices not specifically designed for individuals with mobility impairments (e.g., Segway products). Wheelchairs and other devices designed for use by people with mobility impairments must be permitted in all areas open to pedestrian use. “Other power-driven mobility devices” must be permitted unless such use would fundamentally alter the entity’s programs, services, or activities, create a direct threat, or create a safety hazard.



Personal Care Attendants

Personal care attendants accompany an individual with a disability for the express purpose of aiding in daily living, transferring, and the like. Personal care attendants are often not charged full admission because they are attending a recreation venue solely in their work capacity as an assistant to the person with a disability. Many recreation agencies offer “membership plus one” or “caregiver cards” that allow the personal care attendant to enter the recreation venue without question about fees and charges.

6. Bridge the gap between ability and activity: customers' needs and a satisfying experience

Bridge any gap that may exist between the customer's needs and abilities and a satisfying recreation experience.

All people want fun-filled recreation experiences in their lives. Differences in a customer's functional level may make it necessary to change the activity or the place where the activity is done. Find out a customer's abilities in relation to the demands of the recreation activity or environment and use that information to figure out how to bridge the gap between the two if needed. You can learn about your customers through your registration or check-in process.

Registration practices: the first point of contact in any kind of recreation experience is often some form of registration or check-in. Whether it is a formal or informal check-in process, it is a chance to start a conversation about what will be needed for a successful and fun-filled experience. Asking if any additional assistance is needed on your registration or promotional materials is the first step. You are inviting potential customers to dialogue with you about what they need to successfully participate in the recreation program or activity.

Bridge the gap with accommodations, modifications, and adaptations. There is a wealth of adapted equipment available to help people with disabilities enjoy your services or programs. Equipment ranges from wheelchairs, to assisted listening devices, to balance aids. A source to find adapted equipment is www.abledata.com. You can connect with your local independent living center for additional ideas. Activity adaptation and modifications, like changing the rules or skill level may allow people with varying abilities to participate more fully.

7. Support each customer's unique needs

A best practice is to provide a quiet or "take a break" space. People vary in their ability to handle the noise, stimulation, and activity level of a recreation environment. A best practice to support all people is to provide a "quiet space," "quiet room," or "take a break space."

Your calming places might be a separate room in an indoor setting or a cave in an outdoor playground. It can even be the corner of a quiet lounge area or a vacant office you repurpose. It is a place where children or even adults can be apart from the chaos of the recreation environment. For children with sensory integration disorders and autism spectrum disorders, this need can be acute (from www.Kaboom.org).

You can also offer and advertise "quiet times," where the noise and activity level are calmer and less busy. Many families will choose to recreate at these times rather than peak times.

Another best practice is to offer the additional support of extra staff or volunteers who help the main recreation staff provide the additional attention or communication that some customers may need to participate in programs or services.



Identify a good quiet space including: few windows or openings, quiet but accessible to the flow of play or the recreation area, insulated from outside sounds, natural or white colors, soft surfaces, floor mats, calming lighting, calming music, etc.



8. Your staff are your ambassadors

Staff must understand what inclusive practices include and how to make it happen.

Staff, from permanent to seasonal, must understand what inclusion is and how to make it happen.

Staff hiring and training: Be sure that all staff members, from permanent to seasonal, understand what inclusive practices include and how to provide accommodations.

Advertise for staff with a willingness to provide inclusive recreation experiences. Job descriptions can include the importance of inclusion. Interviews include questions about experience and knowledge of working with people with disabilities.

Staff training on inclusion and accessibility should be conducted for every new staff member, and for each new program session. Staff training should be ongoing, consistent, and comprehensive.

Staff training topics: Provide routine staff training on disability awareness and inclusion strategies, such as activity and equipment adaptations and positive behavioral supports.

Here are some examples of staff training topics:

- Value and benefits of inclusion
- Disability awareness
- Person-first language
- Confidentiality
- Policies & Scenarios (i.e. “What would you do in this situation?”)

A staff member who is welcoming and inclusive:

1. participates in disability awareness training
2. knows who the inclusive point of contact is at your agency (CTRS)
3. knows and enforces the policy for service animals
4. knows and enforces the policy for power and other mobility devices
5. knows and executes the plan for safe evacuations of persons with disabilities
6. knows the policy for personal care attendants.
7. uses person first language
8. treats people with respect and in a welcoming manner
9. seeks out additional training and experience related to disability and inclusive practices
10. knows about the agency's adaptive equipment
11. knows and implements the procedure for accommodations with extra staff or volunteers when needed
12. knows the policy and requests arrangement of sign language interpreters
13. uses alternative forms of communication when needed
14. believes that inclusion of all people is important

The City of Brentwood Parks & Recreation Department will work to continuously improve equity and inclusive practices, increase accessibility for all through health and wellness initiatives to increase the quality of life of the community.



Brentwood Parks & Recreation will monitor the following indicators to track progress of inclusive practices and efforts:

- Does our agency communicate a vision that values the participation of all people as members of the community?
- Does our agency's improvement plan include inclusive practices with action steps to support implementation?
- Is there adequate, regularly scheduled, ongoing planning time for agency staff to collaborate on inclusive and adaptive programs and events?
- Does our agency engage the whole community by providing multiple opportunities and modes for participating?
- Are there professional development opportunities for staff regarding inclusive strategies and supports?
- Are community members from targeted populations engaged in programing, utilizing facilities, and taking part in future planning conversations?

References:

National Recreation & Parks Association www.nrpa.org

Inclusive Recreation Resource Center and Adirondack North Country Association