



# 2025 ADA Celebration!

## Oregon's Journey to Accessibility: Removing Barriers



# Today's Presenters:



Todd D. Woodward,  
Oregon Disabilities Commission (ODC)



Tom Stenson,  
Disability Rights Oregon



Katie Warden,  
Northwest ADA Center



Brenda Gessner,  
ADA & Title VI ODOT



# Oregon's Leadership in Disability Rights: From Enhanced Protections to Sanctuary Innovation

Todd D. Woodward, Commissioner

Oregon Disabilities Commission

Date: 29 July 2025



# Happy Disability Pride Month

# Oregon's Proud Legacy

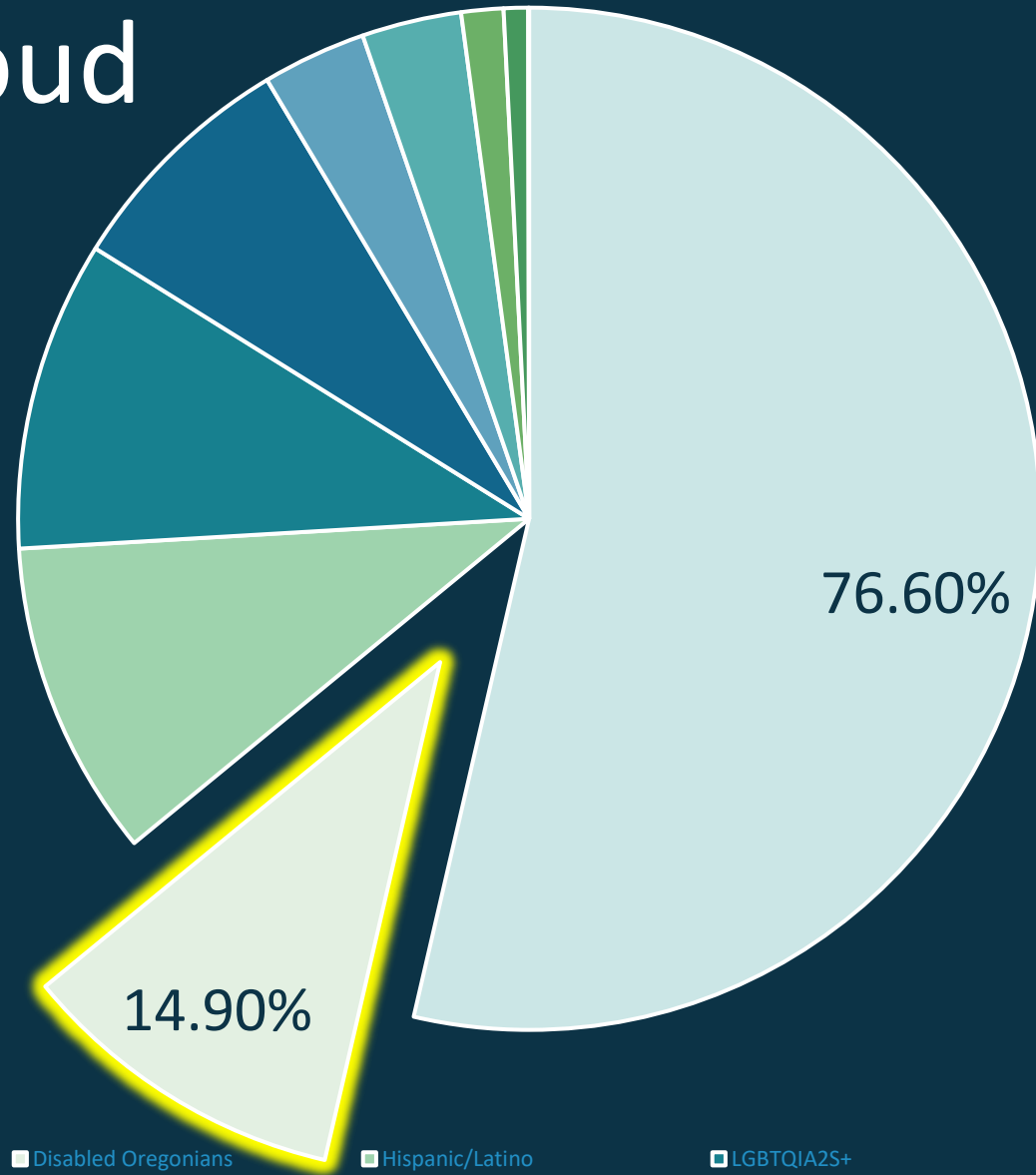




# Rainbow Butterfly Kitten of Inclusion



# Oregon's Proud Legacy



- White alone
- Some other race
- Disabled Oregonians
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Black or African American
- LGBTQIA2S+
- American Indian / Alaskan Native
- Multiracial (Two or more races)
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

# Oregon's Proud Legacy

Comprehensive  
framework of state  
disability protections





# Oregon's Foundation

## The Equality Act Framework

ORS Chapter 659A



# Oregon's Foundation

- Beyond Federal Scope
- Broader Disability Definition
- Enhanced Enforcement



# Employment

## Setting the National Standard

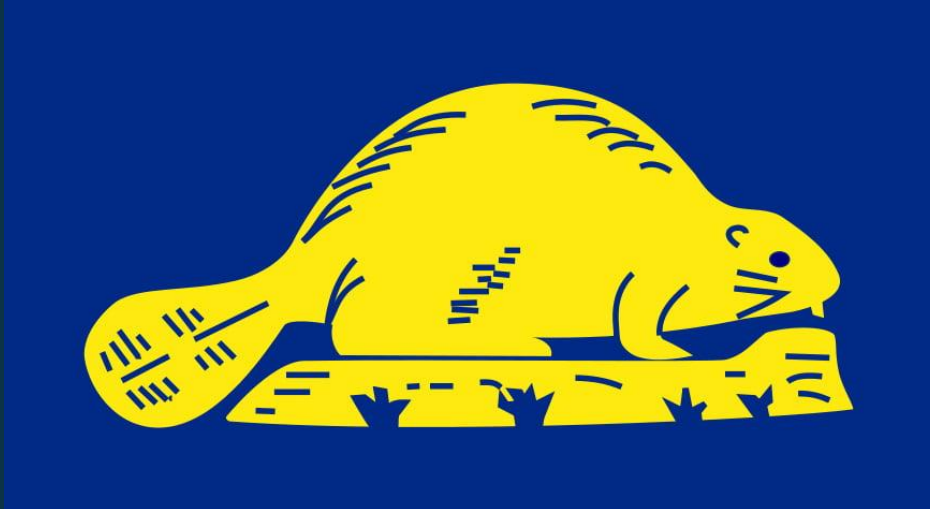
- Stricter Accommodation Standards
- Comprehensive Mental Health Protections



# Housing

## Pioneering Accessibility Beyond Federal Mandates

- Enhanced Accommodation Requirements
- Service Animal Innovation
- Building Code Leadership





# Education

## Expanding Inclusion and Innovation

- Assistive Technology Leadership
- Inclusive Classroom Innovation
- Higher Education Protections
- Section 504 and IDEA Enhancements



# Healthcare & Communication

## Accessibility Innovation

- Communication Access Rights
- Telemedicine Accessibility
- Mental Health Integration



# Transportation & Infrastructure

- Public Transit Innovation
- Pedestrian Infrastructure
- Ride-Share Accessibility



# Democratic Participation

## Vote-by-Mail Innovation

- Inherent Accessibility
- Accessible In-Person Options
- Ballot Design Innovation





# Enforcement Innovation

## Making Rights Real

- State Agency Coordination
- Community Partnership
- Legal Remedies
- Data-Drive Improvement



# The Vision

Oregon as America's Disability Justice Sanctuary

What Sanctuary Means



**Oregon is a  
Sanctuary State**

# The Vision

## Oregon as America's Disability Justice Sanctuary

### Sanctuary Is:

1. Protection
2. Mitigating Service Cuts
3. Providing Safe Haven



# Oregon's Unique Advantages

- Legal Framework
- Enforcement Mechanisms
- Political Will





# Innovation Opportunities

- New disability rights frameworks
- Cutting-edge assistive technology
- Inclusive economic models
- Lead research
- State contractor disability hiring goals



# Next Steps

- Legislative Action
- Agency Implementation
- Community Engagement



# Conclusion: Oregon's Historic Opportunity

- Historic crossroads
- Oregon's track record
- 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ADA as a Commitment
- Disability Sanctuary



# Conclusion: Oregon's Historic Opportunity

- Disability community has always led!
- 1977 to 2025





# Conclusion: Oregon's Historic Opportunity

The future of disability rights may well be written in Oregon.

Let's write it together.





live  
laugh  
love  
lawsuit

# The Disability Rights Movement





# Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

“[N]o otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States... shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

Applies to:

- Public Schools
- Public Transportation
- Employment
- Healthcare



# The Americans with Disabilities Act

- In the context of the ADA, “disability” is a legal term rather than a medical one
- A person who has a physical or mental “impairment” that substantially limits one or more major life activity
- This includes those with *a record* or are *regarded* as a person with a disability



Photo Credit: Disabled And Here



Curb Ramps



Houselessness



Emergency Planning





## Curb Ramps

- 97% of ODOT's sidewalks and curb ramps aren't in line with the law.
- Ramps must meet federal standards (e.g. 36 inches wide)
- ODOT must make all state curb ramps compliant by 2032.
- PBOT must install or fix 16,000 ramps by 2030



# Portland Ramp? Request a Fix!

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/76452>





# The ADA & Houselessness

- Grants Pass' city ordinances violate ADA, 504, and state law (ORS 195.530 and ORS [659A.142](#))
- The closure of a designated camping site and the limited hours for another
- Site was inaccessible and dangerous
- "Unreasonable" and fails to accommodate people with disabilities.
- Won [preliminary injunction](#)
- Working with City to increase designated, accessible camping sites



# Emergency Planning

- ADA requires that emergency plans, programs, and services be accessible to and inclusive of individuals with disabilities
- Equal access to emergency information, evacuation procedures, transportation, shelter, and other related services.
- Public entities must make reasonable modifications to their plans and procedures to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities.



# Northwest ADA Center

- **Technical Assistance**

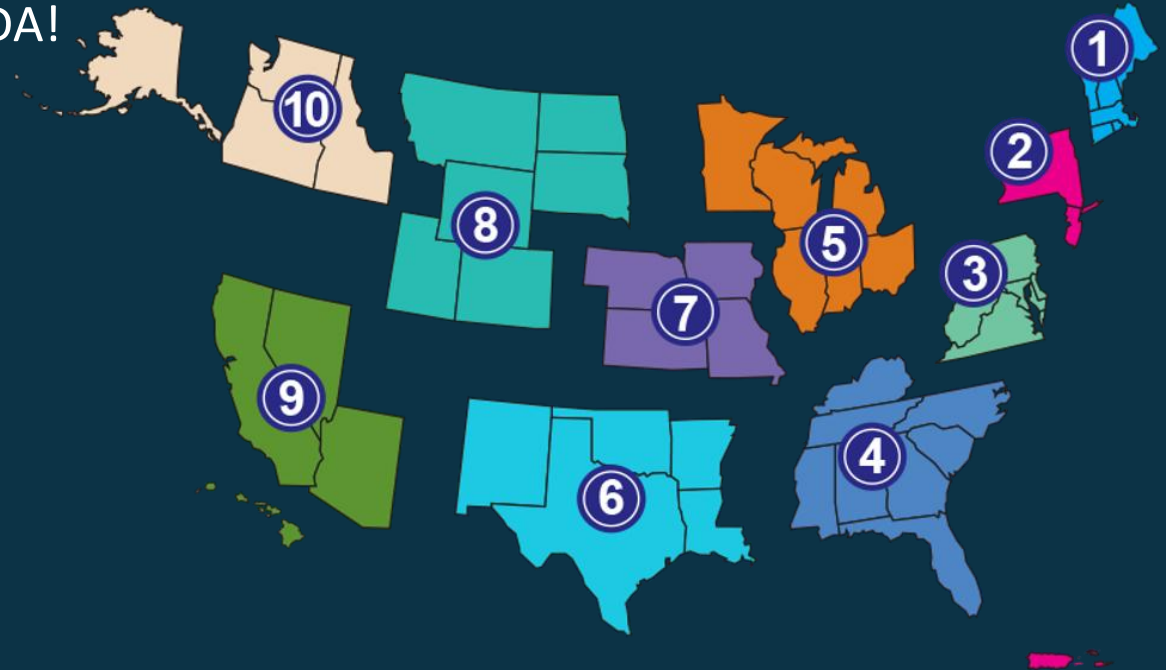
- Call or email questions about the ADA!
- 1-800-949-4232
- [nwadactr@uw.edu](mailto:nwadactr@uw.edu)

- **ADA Trainings**

- **Information Dissemination**

- [NW ADA Center](#)
- [ADA and Healthcare](#)

- **Research**



# Oregon Technical Assistance

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- July 26, 2024, to July 26, 2025
- 298 ADA Questions
- Top 5 Issues
  - Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications
  - Enforcement
  - Facility Access
  - Accessible Parking
  - Service Animals



# Oregon ADA and Healthcare Webinar Series

- **Partnership:** Northwest ADA Center & Oregon Health Authority (OHA)
- **Format:** Four-part webinar series, written content, short videos
  - Free and available online: [ADA and Healthcare](#)
- **Goal:** Increase disability and ADA knowledge among healthcare providers



**Northwest ADA Center**  
**DISABILITY BIAS**

Effective Communication and Reasonable Modification

March 27, 2024

ADA and Healthcare Webinar Series

Presented by Oregon Health Authority and Northwest ADA Center



ADA and Healthcare  
Webinar Series  
Presented by Oregon Health Authority and Northwest ADA Center

Fact Sheet: Accessible Healthcare  
Practicing Disability Allyship

**Barriers to healthcare**

Over sixty-one million Americans have disabilities and many face unequal treatment in healthcare settings. Many factors likely contribute to this inequality, one cause involves healthcare providers' negative views and assumptions about people with disabilities. This is called disability bias. Disability bias creates barriers to healthcare access and can show up in many ways including:

- Interactions with patients
- Inaccessible facilities and equipment
- Not planning for accommodation needs
- Being reluctant to discuss disability
- Viewing disability as a medical issue rather than as a lived experience

# Previous Research Identifies Knowledge Gap

- **Survey of 714 U.S. physicians:**
  - 82% reported believing people with disabilities have a worse quality of life than non-disabled people
  - 36% reported knowing little or nothing about their responsibilities under the ADA
  - 71% provided incorrect answers about who makes decisions about reasonable accommodations for patients with disability
- **Citations:**
  - lezzoni, L. et al.,. “Physicians’ Perceptions Of People with Disabilities and Their Health Care” (2021).
  - lezzoni, L. et al.,. “US Physicians’ Knowledge About The Americans With Disabilities Act And Accommodation Of Patients With Disability” (2022).

# Who We Reached

- Over 2,000 healthcare providers completed 1 or more recorded webinars
- Most common roles:
  - RNs, Pharmacists, Therapists
- 70% of participants were in the NW Region
- Webinars count towards OHA Cultural Competence Continuing Education credits

Practice Location	Number	Percent (N=3921)
OR	2428	62%
WA	126	3%
ID	75	2%
AK	4	.1%
Multiple States	107	3%
Total in NW Region	2740	70%

# Quotes from Participants

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- **Open-ended survey question: “In what ways will you use this information?”**
  - "This made me think a little, there are no questions pertaining to accommodations on immunization intake forms that people fill out online or in person."
  - "I now plan to engage [in] accessibility check-ins with patients."
  - "In my work as a CNA and future nurse, I will be mindful in how I talk to disabled people, as well as remember that understanding a condition is not the same as living with it."

# Thank You!

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- **Please reach out with your ADA questions:**
  - Phone: 1-800-949-4232
  - Email: [nwadactr@uw.edu](mailto:nwadactr@uw.edu)
  - Website: [NW ADA Center](#)
  - [ADA and Healthcare Webinar Series](#)



Americans with Disabilities Act

# Oregon's Journey to Accessibility: Removing Barriers

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Brenda Gessner, ADA/Title VI Program Manager  
Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)  
July 29, 2025



# ODOT Quick Links

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## Social Media

 [Like us on Facebook](#)

 [Like us on Instagram](#)

 [See us on Flickr](#)

 [Watch us on Youtube](#)

## Contact Us

[Oregon Department of Transportation](#)  
355 Capitol Street NE, MS 11  
Salem , OR , 97301-3871 USA

 [Media Contacts](#)

 [Agency Directory](#)

 [Ask ODOT](#)

 [Contact DMV](#)

 [1-888-275-8388 ODOT](#)

 [1-503-945-5000 DMV](#)

## Links

[Accessibility at ODOT](#)

[Nondiscrimination and Equal Access](#)

[Administrative Rules](#)

[Public Records](#)

[Website Feedback](#)

[ODOT Jobs](#)

## About Oregon

[Oregon.gov](#)

[State Employee Search](#)

[Agencies Listing](#)

[Accessibility](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Supported Browsers](#)



[Oregon Department of Transportation : Home : State of Oregon](#)

# ODOT Accessibility Page



## Accessibility at ODOT

[What is Accessibility?](#)

[Report an Accessibility Concern](#)

[ODOT's Mission & Strategic Action Plan](#)

[AOCIL Settlement Agreement](#)

[ADA Transition Plan](#)

[Accommodations at DMV](#)

[Disabled Parking Permits](#)



## Accessible Infrastructure

[ADA Delivery Program](#)

[Find Projects in Your Area](#)

[Engineering for Accessibility](#)

[Delivering ADA Program Projects](#)

[Assets & Inspections](#)

[Accessible Rest Stops](#)



## Related Programs

[Pedestrian & Bicycle Program](#)

[Public Transportation Advisory Committee](#)

[Oregon Transit and Taxi Providers](#)

[Oregon Department of Transportation : Welcome Page : Accessibility : State of Oregon](#)

# ODOT Reports, ADA Standards and Transparency Documents

[ADA Transition Plan](#)

[Settlement Report](#)

[ADA Delivery Program](#)

[Engineering for Accessibility](#)

[Assets and Inspections](#)

[Oregon Department of Transportation : TAP Home page : Transparency, Accountability and Performance : State of Oregon](#)

[Oregon Department of Transportation : State of the System: Welcome Page : State of the System : State of Oregon](#)

[2024-2028 Strategic Action Plan](#)

# What is CQCR

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The acronym reflects the types of submissions ODOT receives to report a possible barrier to access:

- Comments
- Questions
- Concerns
- Requests

The online form is also called, “Report an Accessibility Concern”.

ODOT works directly with individuals who submit CQCRs to find information and seek resolutions. ODOT uses the CQCR process to address issues related to accessibility, such as missing or non-compliant curb ramps and pedestrian signals.

# How the CQCR Process Works

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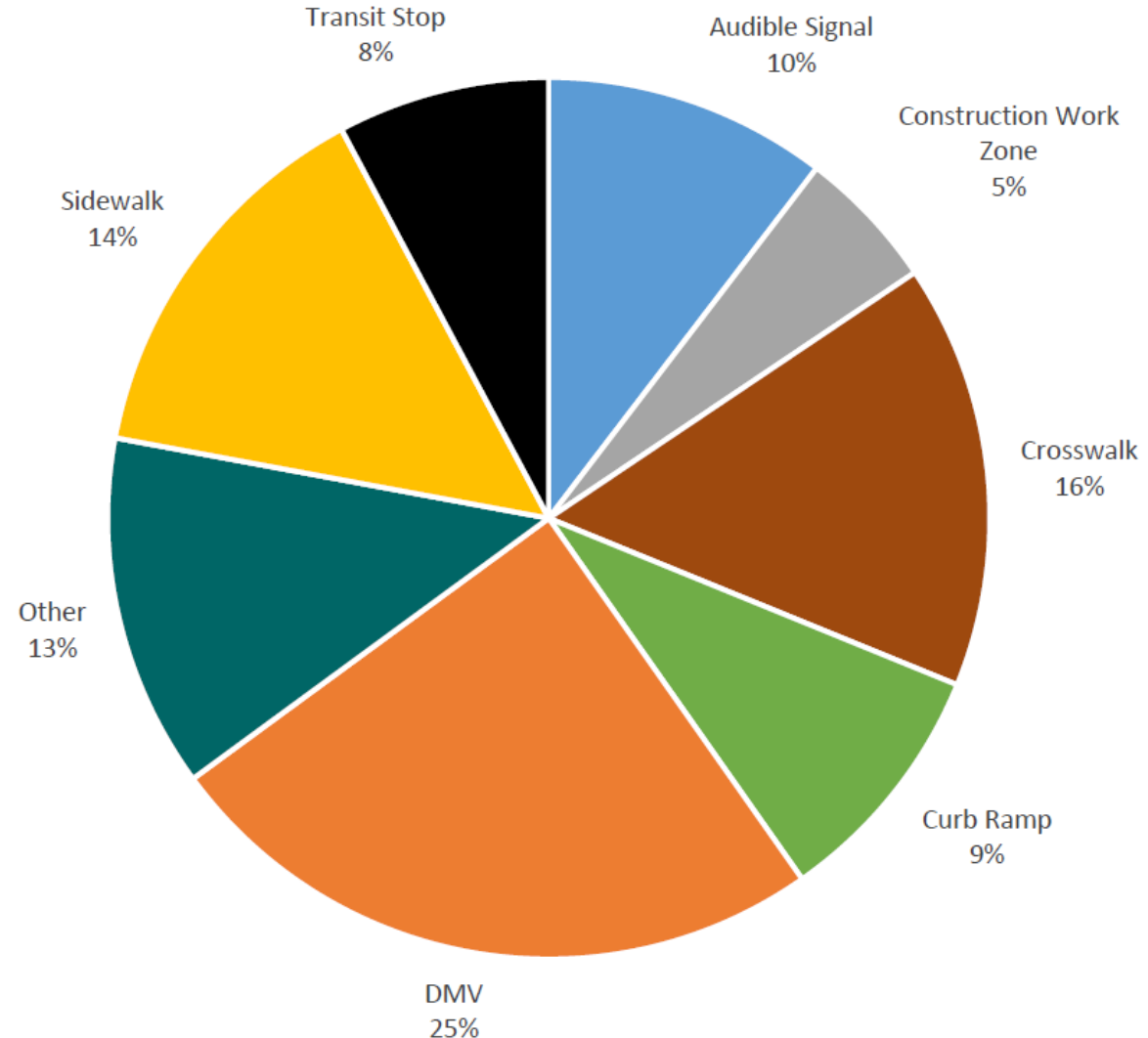
1. CQCR forms can be submitted online or emailed to an ADA specific email address.
2. The Civil Rights Coordinator reviews the CQCR and sends them to the proper contact in the agency.
3. An ODOT employee will reach out to you and communicate with you throughout the process. If the CQCR is on the local agency ROW, we hand these cases off to that local jurisdictions ADA Manager/Coordinator.
4. The ODOT keeps records of all CQCRs for the year and report the statistics in the annual Settlement Report.

# CQCR Detail Summary from 2024

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ODOT received 77 comments questions, concerns, or requests during 2024.

For each submission, ODOT tracks the subject and location of the request and the steps to identify solutions.





# Two Way Communication

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[Advisory Committees](#)

[STIP](#)

[Open Houses](#)

Surveys

Emails

[Social Media](#)

Project Focus Groups

[Subscription Services](#)

[Safety Information](#)



# ADA and Other Resources

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[Rest Areas with Accessible Facilities | TripCheck - Oregon Traveler Information](#)

[Oregon Department of Transportation](#) (subscription services)

[Home | Transportation Project Tracker](#) or [Oregon Department of Transportation : Oregon Department of Transportation Projects : Projects : State of Oregon](#) (ADA Projects)

[Oregon Department of Transportation : Disabled Person Parking Permits : Oregon Driver & Motor Vehicle Services : State of Oregon](#)

[Oregon Department of Transportation : Oregon Transit and Taxi Providers : Public Transportation : State of Oregon](#)

[Oregon Department of Transportation : Advisory Committees : Get Involved : State of Oregon](#)

[Road & Weather Conditions Map | TripCheck - Oregon Traveler Information](#)

# ODOT Partners

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Oregon Commission for the Blind

Oregon Disabilities Commission

Statewide Independent Living Centers

Local Agencies – Cities and Counties

Community Based Organizations

Other State Agencies

Federal DOT Partners



# Key Takeaways

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Communication

Participation

Feedback

Resources

Partnerships

Accessibility

Training



# Contact Emails and Phone Numbers

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[Odot\\_ada@odot.oregon.gov](mailto:Odot_ada@odot.oregon.gov)

[Odot.titlevi@odot.oregon.gov](mailto:Odot.titlevi@odot.oregon.gov)

[Ask DMV](#) or [1-503-945-5000](tel:1-503-945-5000)

[Ask ODOT](#) or [1-888-275-6368](tel:1-888-275-6368)

[ADA CQCR \(Comments, Questions, Concerns, and Requests\) program](#)

[Title VI Complaint Form](#)

[Oregon Department of Transportation : Office of Civil Rights Home Page : Civil Rights : State of Oregon](#)

[Oregon Department of Transportation : Contact Us : Civil Rights : State of Oregon](#)





# Thank you

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Brenda J. Gessner

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971-372-9291

[Brenda.j.gessner@ODOT.Oregon.gov](mailto:Brenda.j.gessner@ODOT.Oregon.gov)

[ODOT\\_ADA@ODOT.Oregon.Gov](mailto:ODOT_ADA@ODOT.Oregon.Gov)

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# Thank You!



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