

MEMORANDUM

To: MPO Policy Committee

From: CMAP Staff

Date: December 23, 2025

Subject: Accessible Communities Program Update

Action Requested: Information

Background

In 2021, the Metropolitan Planning Council released a report titled “[Where the Sidewalk Ends](#),” which assessed municipal compliance with Title II of the ADA in northeastern Illinois. The report found only 22 communities (9%) had a Transition Plan, a Title II requirement for communities with 50 or more employees. This report provided the foundation for CMAP’s Accessible Communities Program. The Program launched in 2022 with additional funding from IDOT and has since made measurable progress in making a more inclusive and accessible region, with a focus on the public right-of-way.

Establishing a Baseline and Program

Title II of the ADA includes five administrative requirements for public entities with 50 or more employees and two for public entities with less than 50 employees. The Accessible Communities Program team, through the 2022 CMAP Municipal Survey, website scans, and interviews, established a baseline of compliance within the CMAP region. The team also developed and implemented a regional training program that was attended by 273 people, some of whom attended multiple training sessions on various topics, representing 140 organizations, including 86 municipalities. Additional initiatives included research into links between accessibility and economic development, establishing a regional ADA Coordinator peer group, and providing technical assistance for ADA public right-of-way transition plans for 12 municipalities.

Measuring Progress

The Accessible Communities Program is using the ADA Title II five administrative requirements as metrics for regional compliance. Since the launch of the program two years prior, the region has made substantial improvements to improving accessibility, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. ADA Title II Compliance in Northeastern Illinois

ADA Title II Requirement	# of municipalities		% increase
	2022	2024	
1. Notice of rights under the ADA (284 communities)	77	111	44%
2. Self-evaluation (284 communities)	41	44	7%
3. ADA Coordinator (50+ employees, 241 communities)	29	103	255%
4. Grievance Procedure* (50+ employees, 241 communities)	83	99*	19%
5. Transition Plan ** (50+ employees, 241 communities)	38	43	13%
<p><i>*Two-hundred and forty-one communities in the region have over 50 employees and therefore are required to have a grievance procedure; of those, ninety-nine have a grievance procedure in place. An additional three municipalities, although not required to, have a grievance procedure in place.</i></p> <p><i>**CMAP staff could not verify four communities that were counted as part of “Where the Sidewalk Ends” and those have been excluded from this inventory.</i></p>			

Next Steps

The Accessible Communities Program will continue to offer technical assistance for ADA PROW transition plans, which will prioritize and guide public infrastructure improvements. Upcoming projects include convening a regional accessibility steering committee, launching a regional engagement program, and providing additional training to municipal staff to ensure public meetings and communications meet the needs of people with disabilities and the public at-large.