



Town of Chester Americans With Disabilities Act (Ada) Title II Self-Evaluation

Prepared Pursuant to:
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. §12131 et seq.)
28 CFR Part 35
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Date: June 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Chester, Massachusetts, is committed to ensuring that all residents, visitors, employees, and program participants have equal access to municipal services, programs, activities, facilities, communications, and information.

This ADA Self-Evaluation has been conducted pursuant to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by state and local governments. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the accessibility of Town operations and identify barriers that may limit participation by individuals with disabilities.

The Town recognizes that accessibility is an ongoing responsibility and that this document serves as a living framework for continuous improvement.

I. PURPOSE

The objectives of this Self-Evaluation are to:

- Review Town policies, practices, and procedures for ADA compliance.
- Evaluate accessibility of municipal programs, services, and activities.
- Assess accessibility of Town-owned facilities.
- Identify barriers to participation and access.
- Recommend corrective actions.
- Establish priorities for future ADA Transition Planning.

II. LEGAL AUTHORITY

This Self-Evaluation is conducted pursuant to:

- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Title II.
- ADA Amendments Act of 2008.
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

- Massachusetts General Laws regarding public accommodations and accessibility.
- Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (521 CMR) regulations.

III. MUNICIPAL PROFILE

The Town of Chester is a rural community located in Hampden County, Massachusetts. Municipal services include:

- Town Hall administrative services.
- Public safety services.
- Highway and public works operations.
- Public meetings and elections.
- Recreation and community activities.
- Library services.
- Senior and community services.

IV. ADA COORDINATION

The Town shall designate an ADA Coordinator responsible for:

- Receiving and responding to ADA accommodation requests.
- Monitoring compliance activities.
- Coordinating accessibility improvements.
- Maintaining ADA-related records.
- Serving as a liaison with residents and visitors with disabilities.

Current ADA Coordinator:

Jason Forgue
Building Inspector
Town of Chester
15 Middlefield Road
Chester, MA 01011

V. NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The Town does not discriminate based on disability in admission to, participation in, or receipt of services, programs, or activities.

Reasonable accommodations shall be provided upon request to ensure equal access to Town programs and services.

VI. ADA GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Town shall maintain a written ADA grievance procedure that provides a process for resolving complaints regarding disability discrimination or barriers to accessibility.

The procedure shall include:

- Method of filing a complaint.
- Investigation procedures.

- Written response timelines.
- Appeal process.

VII. POLICIES AND PRACTICES REVIEW

The Town reviewed existing policies and identified the following findings:

Strengths

- Public meetings are generally open and accessible.
- Accommodation requests are considered when received.
- Staff demonstrate willingness to assist residents with disabilities.

Areas for Improvement

- Formal ADA policies should be consolidated and publicly available.
- ADA Coordinator designation should be publicly posted.
- ADA grievance procedures should be published on the Town website.
- Staff training regarding ADA obligations should be conducted periodically.
- Main Fire Station lacks an ADA-accessible entrance due to stairs at the primary entrance.
- Town Hall accessible ramp railings require repair or replacement to meet accessibility and safety standards.

VIII. PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY REVIEW

Programs and Services Evaluated

- Town administration.
- Board and committee meetings.
- Elections and voting.
- Public safety services.
- Recreation programming.
- Library services.
- Public information and communications.

Findings

The Town generally provides programming access; however, accessibility may be affected where facilities contain architectural barriers or where communications are not available in accessible formats.

Recommendations

- Establish formal procedures for accommodation requests.
- Provide accessible electronic documents whenever feasible.
- Ensure public notices include accommodation contact information.
- Utilize captioning and assistive technologies for virtual meetings when available.

IX. COMMUNICATION ACCESSIBILITY

The Town evaluated communication methods including:

- Website content.
- Public notices.
- Meeting materials.
- Forms and applications.

Findings

Potential barriers include:

- Legacy PDF documents that may not be screen-reader accessible.
- Inconsistent use of alternative text for images.
- Limited procedures for accessible document production.

Recommendations

- Conduct website accessibility audits.
- Adopt WCAG 2.1 AA standards where applicable.
- Train staff in accessible document creation.
- Provide alternative formats upon request.

X. FACILITY ACCESSIBILITY REVIEW

The Town reviewed publicly accessible municipal facilities.

Facilities Reviewed

- Town Hall
- Police Department facilities
- Fire Department facilities
- Highway Department facilities
- Public meeting spaces
- Parks and recreational areas
- Library facilities

General Findings

Potential barriers may include:

- Inaccessible parking spaces.
- Entrance door hardware issues.
- Thresholds and level changes.
- Inadequate signage.
- Restroom accessibility deficiencies.
- Limited accessible routes.

Recommendations

Priority 1 – Immediate Corrections

- Install or improve ADA-compliant signage.
- Repair accessible parking markings.
- Address minor hardware and door accessibility issues.

Priority 2 – Short-Term Improvements (1–3 years)

- Improve accessible routes. Fire and Town Hall ramps
- Improve Website ADA compliance and accessibility
- Improve accessibility for meetings

Priority 3 – Long-Term Improvements (3–5 years)

- Major building renovations.
- Site accessibility upgrades.
- Park and recreation accessibility enhancements.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Town shall seek public input regarding accessibility concerns through:

- Public hearings.
- Online comment opportunities.
- Consultation with residents with disabilities.
- Coordination with disability advocacy organizations.

XII. CONCLUSION

The Town of Chester is committed to providing equal access to municipal services, programs, activities, and facilities for all individuals.

This Self-Evaluation identifies existing strengths and areas for improvement and establishes a framework for continued compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Massachusetts accessibility requirements.

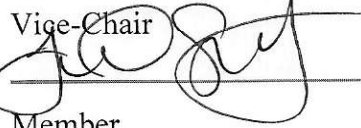
The Town will use the findings contained in this report to develop and maintain an ADA Transition Plan prioritizing accessibility improvement and ensuring ongoing compliance.

Adopted by:

Town of Chester Select Board



Chair

Vice-Chair


Member

Date: 6/30/26