
ADA Requests for Bexar County Courthouse

1 message

Alicia Perez <alicia@aliciaperez4judge.com>
To: dianne.garcia@bexar.org

Wed, Dec 3, 2025 at 3:09 PM

I am writing to share several observations about ADA accessibility within our county courts, along with a set of practical, low-cost recommendations that could significantly improve access to justice for people with disabilities.

My goal in raising these points is simple: to ensure that every person appearing in Bexar County courts—whether represented or self-represented—can meaningfully participate in their own case. As you know, the Americans with Disabilities Act applies fully to county courts, and our shared responsibility is to make that access real, visible, and functional.

Observations About Current ADA Accessibility in Bexar County Courts

Based on review of the publicly available information on the Bexar County website and court pages, the following gaps appear to exist:

1. No Clearly Published ADA Procedure for Court Hearings

The county website includes general ADA information, but does not provide a clear, courtroom-specific procedure for requesting accommodations. The existing guidance—"notify the court in advance"—does not include a timeline, contact person, form, or detailed explanation of available accommodations.

2. ADA Information Is Fragmented and Difficult to Locate

Disability-related information is scattered across several pages focused on county services, discrimination complaints, or website accessibility. There is no unified place explaining courtroom accommodations, especially for self-represented litigants.

3. No Visible Courtroom Signage Explaining ADA Rights

As far as publicly available materials indicate, there are no posted notices in courtrooms or courthouse entry areas explaining:

- what disabilities qualify (including invisible disabilities),
- what accommodations exist, or
- how to request assistance.

4. Many Disabilities Are Invisible, and Many People Do Not Know They Qualify

People with autism, ADHD, PTSD, anxiety, dyslexia, or hearing or processing challenges often do not recognize their condition as a disability under the ADA. Without clear signage or simple explanations, many do not realize accommodations exist or that they have the right to ask for help.

5. No Standard Bench Procedure When a Disability Becomes Apparent

There does not appear to be a consistent protocol for judges or staff to follow when a disability becomes apparent during a hearing. Without a standard approach, responses vary widely, and people may not receive the support they need to

participate meaningfully.

Proposed Low-Cost, High-Impact Improvements

These solutions require minimal resources but would dramatically improve ADA compliance and the experience of court users:

1. Create a Plain-Language ADA Notice for Courtrooms

Post a simple, visible notice in every courtroom and at courthouse entry points that includes:

- examples of disabilities (visible and invisible),
- examples of common accommodations (e.g., extra time, written instructions, assistive listening devices, breaks, simplified language, quiet waiting areas), and
- clear, step-by-step instructions on how to request help.

2. Add ADA Awareness to Every Judge's Standard Hearing Checklist

Judges could include routine prompts such as:

- "Does the participant indicate or appear to have a disability?"
- "Do we need to modify pace, volume, or instructions?"
- "Did the person fully understand today's outcome?"
This requires no funding and would immediately enhance access.

3. Adopt a Simple, Universal ADA Accommodation Request Form

A one-page form, available online and at all clerk's offices, would help standardize the process. The courts should also accept verbal requests, consistent with ADA requirements.

4. Establish a Courtroom ADA-Response Protocol

When a disability is identified during a hearing, judges and staff should follow a clear protocol:

- pause the proceeding,
- identify the barrier,
- offer appropriate accommodations, and
- adjust the process as needed to ensure comprehension and participation.

5. Provide Basic ADA Training for Court Staff

Training can cover:

- recognizing non-obvious disabilities,
- responding respectfully when a person appears confused or overwhelmed, and
- guiding individuals toward available accommodations.

Closing

These changes would improve courtroom efficiency, reduce confusion, and advance our shared commitment to fairness and accessibility in Bexar County. They are simple, immediately implementable, and consistent with the ADA's mandate

for meaningful access across all public services.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these recommendations further or collaborate on implementing any of these improvements. Thank you for your time and your commitment to serving our community.

Sincerely,

Alicia "Ali" Perez

Candidate for Judge, County Court at Law No. 13