



**THE MAYOR'S OFFICE ON AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES**

**ADDRESSING CITIZENS' CONCERNS**

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**City Hall Gets an Accessible Facelift**



The newly renovated entrance to Birmingham's City Hall is now open for business. The grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony took place January 27, 2011 and was attended by a number of supporters and speakers that helped to commemorate the celebration. Attendees included the Honorable Mayor, William Bell, Sr., Council President, Roderick Royal and other members of the City Council, Birmingham's ADA Advisory Committee members and a number of community agency representatives.

City Hall features a "Universal Design." This means there are no steps or ramps to maneuver and features a zero level, barrier free entrance that makes it user friendly for everyone that visits. Located at the north entrance of the building is an automatic door opener. This feature insures easy access for persons unable to grasp door handles. Citizens entering the building, will find other accessible amenities that include lowered counters at security stations, customer service windows and information desks; accessible water fountains and restroom have also been installed on this level.

The new City Hall entrance not only is classic and beautiful, but also adds a fresh new look. To the credit of everyone involved in this project, all these new features have been added while preserving the look and integrity of another historic landmark in the city center.

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**Good Luck and Success to All**



# Addressing Citizens' Concerns

## Ticket to Work Program

Social Security Ticket to Work Program provides most people receiving Social Security benefits (beneficiaries) more choices for receiving employment services. The Social Security Administration (SSA) issues tickets to eligible beneficiaries who, in turn, may

choose to assign those tickets to an **Employment Network (EN)** of their choice to assist with developing vocational and employment goals so they may earn more income and work towards **self-sufficiency**.

While you are actively participating in the Ticket to Work program, you can get the help you need to find the job that is right for you and you can safely explore your work options without losing your benefits.

- You can easily return to benefits if you have to stop working (known as “expedited reinstatement of benefits”);
- You can continue to receive healthcare benefits; and
- You will not receive a medical continuing disability review (CDR) while using your Ticket.

Self-Sufficiency Through Employment will offer their clients:

- Employment retention
- Transportation assistance (**after 90 days of employment**)
- Educational and career planning
- Referrals for human or social service assistance
- Resume and interview preparation and skills assessment

Individuals with disabilities that are interested in the Ticket To Work program and or wish to participate at no cost for the services offered by Self-Sufficiency Through Employment please, do not hesitate to call Alabama Office (205) 533-3063, Louisiana Office (504) 259-1326 or email [sste@bellsouth.net](mailto:sste@bellsouth.net).

## City of Birmingham Prohibits Illegal Front Yard Parking

City of Birmingham *Ordinance Number 10-11, section 11-8-9*, prohibits parking in any unpaved part of a residential front yard or front area of a business. This ordinance specifically prohibits the parking of all, cars, trucks, SUV's, vans, RV's, motorcycles, boats, trailers, or any other street legal vehicles from parking on any unpaved surfaces in the front



yard. Each violation is a separate offense and subject to a **\$50 fine**.

If you have a disability and feel that you need to park in your yard **for accessibility reasons**, you may contact the City of Birmingham's Zoning Department at (205) 254-2503 to apply for a variance with the Zoning Board of Adjustments.

## Winning the Future for People with Disabilities

In February, President Obama proposed the 2012 Federal Budget. This new budget addresses issues that will greatly benefit the entire disabled population. The introduction of the Budget states, "Having emerged from the worst recession in generations, the President has put forward a plan to rebuild our economy and win the future by out-innovating, out-educating, and out-building our global competitors and creating the jobs and industries of tomorrow." According to the items listed in the 2012 budget, it is strongly noticeable that the disabled population of American is a large priority of the future.



According to the 2012 budget, "To win the future for people with disabilities, the Budget will:"

- Increase Funding for the Education of Children with Disabilities.
- Encourage Workforce Innovation.
- Support Workers with Disabilities.
- Reduce Social Security Claims Backlog.
- Expand Disability Research.
- Strengthen Independent Living.
- Assist Programs for Youth with Disabilities.
- Strengthen Anti-Discrimination Enforcement.
- Provide Housing for Persons with Disabilities.
- Expand Research into Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).
- Help Families Care for Aging and Relatives with Disabilities.
- Support for Employment of People with Disabilities in the Federal Workforce.
- Expand Passenger Rail Options.

The budget goes on to say, "The Vocational Rehabilitation program will contribute \$30 million, and use its expertise to help ensure that the Fund invests in innovative programs and evidence-based practices to provide high-quality employment services to individuals with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities." This implies that, with assistance of Vocational Rehabilitation, disabled individuals that qualify will be awarded a fair opportunity for quality employment despite their having a disability.

In addition, "more than \$103 million for Grants for Independent Living program that would provide formula grants to States to support the provision of independent living services through centers for independent living."

This new budget has taken into account a population that was once disregarded and forgotten about. Because of the efforts of those who refused to sit back and allow mistreatment of the disabled, along with laws that ensure equality for everyone, despite any disability, individuals have been given a chance to earn an education, work in a field of their choosing, and purchase the home of their dreams. The only thing left to do is avoid complacency, refuse to allow mistreatment of any kind, and take full advantage of every opportunity the United States has to offer.

**We are on the web!**

**Office On American with  
Disabilities**

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**The ADA Committee meets every  
Second Friday, 10:00 AM  
2nd Floor City Hall (MOCA)**



## ADA Advisory Committee

Chair – John Duplessis—Easter Seals, Navigator Program

Vice Chair - Twanna Carter– VA Medical Center

Secretary - LaWanda East- Pastor, King of Faith Outreach

### Committee Members

Xaveria Anderson—Ms. Wheelchair Alabama 2007

Michelle Belcher — Muscular Dystrophy

Beth Blaylock — AL-DAN

Trisston Burrows —Ms. Wheelchair America/Alabama 2005

Shirley Hollis — Manager, Birmingham Parks & Recreation

Tina K. Hughes — Chronic Illness Advocacy

Lorine Kelley — Max Transit VIP

Dan Kessler — Dir., Independent Living Resources, Birmingham

Charles Priest— Director, Alabama Head Injury Foundation

Peggy Turner —The Lakeshore foundation

Alice Sanders — United cerebral Palsy

Graham Sisson — ADA State Coordinator, Alabama Rehabilitation

Peggy Turner —The Lakeshore Foundation

Ron Talley — ASSISTECH Group

## Justice Department Settles Disability Discrimination Claim

**WASHINGTON DC**– The Justice Department today announced a \$1.25 million agreement with Warren Properties Inc., Warren Village (**Mobile, AL**) Limited Partnership and Frank R. Warren to settle allegations that the defendants violated the Fair Housing Act by refusing to grant a tenant's requests for a reasonable accommodation. *This settlement is the largest ever obtained by the department in an individual housing discrimination case.*

The lawsuit, filed on April 29, 2009, in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama, alleges that the defendants failed to permit a tenant with a mobility impairment to move to a ground-floor apartment near the front of the building in a 196-unit apartment complex in Mobile, AL. and alleges that the tenant suffered severe injuries as a result of falling down the stairs.

Under the consent decree, the defendants must pay \$1,195,000 to compensate the tenant, along with an additional \$55,000 in fees and costs to the government. The defendants must hire a reasonable accommodation facilitator to handle requests for reasonable accommodations from more than 11,000 housing units in 85 properties managed by Warren Properties Inc. in 15 states.

Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division states "Equal access to housing in the United States is a fundamental right, and this nation will not tolerate discrimination in housing." Denying personas with disabilities their rights violates the Fair Housing Act and HUD and the Department of Justice are committed to ensuring that property owners meet their responsibility to comply with the law.

