**Dots and Dashes**

**July 31, 2023**

# **Audio Description Institute Registration Closes Soon**

Registration is open for the Audio Description Project’s 22nd Audio Description Institute! Sessions will be held virtually from 1 to 5 p.m. Eastern, Monday, August 14, through Friday, August 18. Join us to learn about the art and science of audio description through a mixture of lecture, discussions, and collaborative writing sessions. For more information, or to register, visit <https://acb.org/2023-ADI>. Registration closes on August 4th.

# **Audio Description People’s Choice Award Finalist Vote Opens Tomorrow**

Starting tomorrow, August 1, the 2023 Audio Description People’s Choice Award finalist vote will be open through August 15! The Audio Description People’s Choice Award, now in its second year, is a unique opportunity for fans to get involved by showing their support for the audio description they love the most. The winners will be revealed during the [2023 ACB Audio Description Awards Gala](https://adawardsgala.org/), which will take place virtually on November 14th at 7:30 p.m. Eastern. [Find more information on how to vote for this year’s finalists!](https://acb.org/2023-AD-Peoples-Choice)

# **ACB Introduces the “INSPIRE” Mentoring Program**

Calling all ACB members who are interested in becoming an ACB Guide (Mentor) or Explorer (Mentee)! Applications will be accepted from now through August 17, 2023. Selections will be made by August 31, 2023, with an announcement to follow shortly thereafter. The program officially begins September 14, 2023 and concludes on June 14, 2024. For more information, visit <https://acb.org/2023-INSPIRE>. If you have questions, contact the ACB INSPIRE Mentoring Team via email, [acb.mentoring@gmail.com](mailto:acb.mentoring@gmail.com), or phone (409) 866-5838.

# **Town Hall with Uber Representatives**

ACB hosted the first town hall with Uber representatives as a hybrid event during the Schaumburg convention, with in-person and virtual audience participation. We were joined by Briana Gilmore, Head of Accessibility Policy, and Chris Yoon, Product Manager, from Uber. This session was posted on the ACB Media Network as the Advocacy Update podcast for Thursday, July 20, and is available at: <https://www.acbmedia.org/2023/07/20/a-conversation-with-uber/>.

To submit feedback and ideas regarding Uber’s commitments to service animal handlers, please write to Uber’s team at [serviceanimals-group@uber.com](mailto:serviceanimals-group@uber.com). To learn more about Uber’s service animal policy, visit <https://www.uber.com/us/en/about/accessibility/service-animal-user-guide/>.

ACB encourages everyone who is wrongfully denied access to a ride-share service due to having a disability or due to the presence of a service animal to file a complaint directly with the U.S. Department of Justice. To file a civil rights complaint online, by phone, or by mail, go to <https://civilrights.justice.gov/>.

# **ACB Celebrates the ADA**

On July 26, the American Council of the Blind celebrated the 33rd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by highlighting some of our recent advocacy work in pursuit of a more equitable and inclusive world for people who are blind and have low vision. We cover new developments with accessible currency, our partnership with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on accessible at-home medical testing, and collaborative efforts to reintroduce the Communications, Video, and Technology Accessibility (CVTA) Act. [Check out our ADA anniversary video](https://youtu.be/Fgp9vHfWOl8).

**United Adds Braille to Airplanes**

United Airlines announced Thursday that it is the first U.S. airline to add Braille to its aircraft cabin interiors. The airline has about a dozen planes outfitted with Braille already, and plans to add Braille to its entire mainline fleet of more than 900 planes by 2026. The Braille will help blind and visually impaired people identify row numbers and seat assignments, and will be located in the lavatory as well. Read the full press release at <https://acb.org/United-Airlines-braille>.

**ADA Anniversary Round Table**

The White House Domestic Policy Council held an ADA anniversary Round Table with leaders from the disability rights community, including ACB’s Clark Rachfal, in attendance which focused on recent rule makings, including the DOJ Title II websites and mobile applications accessibility Notice of Proposed Rule Making; the DOT accessibility of in-flight lavatories Final Rule; and the Access Board’s updating of the Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines.

# **Sen. Markey, Rep. Eshoo Reintroduce CVTA**

WASHINGTON, July 25, 2023 – Sen. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), and Rep. Anna G. Eshoo (D-Calif.), today announced the reintroduction of the Communications, Video, and Technology Accessibility (CVTA) Act. The CVTA bolsters standards for television programming and emergency communication, expands accessibility requirements — including closed captions and audio descriptions — to online platforms and video conferencing services, and equips the federal government with the ability to improve accessibility of emerging technologies.

Co-sponsors in the Senate include Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.), Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Peter Welch (D-Vt.), Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) and John Fetterman (D-Pa.).

Read the full press release at <https://tinyurl.com/bdfdej5s>. A copy of the legislation can be found at <https://www.markey.senate.gov/download/communications-video-and-technology-accessibility-act_-072523pdf>.

# **DOJ Advances Proposed Rule to Strengthen Web and Mobile App Access for People with Disabilities**

WASHINGTON, July 25, 2023 – The Justice Department sent to the Federal Register for publication a notice of proposed rulemaking under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that aims to improve web and mobile applications (apps) access for people with disabilities and clarify how public entities – primarily state and local governments – can meet their existing ADA obligations as many of their activities shift online.

The proposed rule will soon be available for review on the Federal Register’s website at [www.federalregister.gov](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHA6Ly93d3cuZmVkZXJhbHJlZ2lzdGVyLmdvdj91dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkiLCJidWxsZXRpbl9pZCI6IjIwMjMwNzI1LjgwMTYxNTUxIn0.YnqT5yUkkcfs1SndItCyCFjYJ-KtW5A7vpWdJypjHr4/s/524151806/br/223173571689-l). A fact sheet that provides information about the proposed rule will soon be available on [www.ada.gov](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHA6Ly93d3cuYWRhLmdvdi8_dXRtX21lZGl1bT1lbWFpbCZ1dG1fc291cmNlPWdvdmRlbGl2ZXJ5IiwiYnVsbGV0aW5faWQiOiIyMDIzMDcyNS44MDE2MTU1MSJ9.rEj5OEEHC-fdHw_HqVhgwG3hkxfeKDfA0sI0gH55-9E/s/524151806/br/223173571689-l). The Department invites the public to submit their comments on the proposed rule once it is published. The comment period will be open for 60 days from the date the proposed rule is published. Public comments can be submitted on [www.regulations.gov](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHA6Ly93d3cucmVndWxhdGlvbnMuZ292P3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzA3MjUuODAxNjE1NTEifQ.sVf6J3qQMuEGG0En4m5q28bbkRYakEhzXV6fBsiko5U/s/524151806/br/223173571689-l).

# **U.S. Access Board Commemorates the**

# **33rd Anniversary of the ADA**

July 26th marked the 33rd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The U.S. Access Board commemorated the anniversary with a disability town hall meeting which ACB’s Swatha Nandhakumar attended. In the next few weeks, the Board will publish the [Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)](https://www.access-board.gov/prowag/) under Title II of the ADA that address access to sidewalks and streets, crosswalks, curb ramps, pedestrian signals, on-street parking, shared use paths, and other components of public rights-of-way. PROWAG will apply to alterations or additions to existing rights-of-way as well as newly constructed pedestrian facilities. Read the full story at <https://www.access-board.gov/news/2023/07/26/u-s-access-board-commemorates-the-33rd-anniversary-of-the-americans-with-disabilities-act-ada/>.

# **NIH RADx Tech Publishes Comprehensive Best Practices for the Design of Accessible COVID-19 Home Tests**

Available now and hosted by the U.S. Access Board, the [Best Practices for the Design of Accessible COVID-19 Home Tests](https://www.access-board.gov/tad/radx/) document aims to ensure that more people can access and use COVID-19 home tests, including those who have no vision or low vision, have a reduced range of dexterity or motor skills, and are aging. The document details recommendations for test designers and manufacturers to create user-friendly and accessible COVID-19 home tests. While the initial focus is on COVID-19 testing, the ergonomic and accessible design principles outlined can also be applied to home tests for other diseases and conditions. Read the full press release at <https://tinyurl.com/bdcnahtp>.

# **Advocacy on Autonomous Vehicles**

In June, the American Council of the Blind and 14 other disability rights advocacy organizations sent a letter to the House Energy and Commerce Committee advocating for legislation to create a national framework for the research, development, testing, and deployment of accessible autonomous vehicles. This legislation would alleviate transportation barriers for people with disabilities and provide opportunities for independence and ease of access that have so far been out of reach for far too many people in the United States. Read the letter at <https://www.acb.org/Energy-Commerce-Committee-letter-AV>, or listen to it on the Washington Connection. On July 19th, advocacy and outreach specialist Swatha Nandhakumar attended the House Energy and Commerce Committee Autonomous Vehicle Hearing. More information will be forthcoming.

# **ACB Submits Comments on HUD’s Advance Notice of Proposed Rule Making**

Last week, ACB submitted comments on the [Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Advance Notice of Proposed Rule Making (ANPRM) on Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability: Updates to HUD’s Section 504 Regulations (Docket No. FR-6257-A-01c)](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/04/25/2023-08464/nondiscrimination-on-the-basis-of-disability-updates-to-huds-section-504-regulations). ACB strongly urged HUD to require recipients of HUD funding to operate and maintain their websites pursuant to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the most current version of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG); and further, to identify and post on their websites and public materials the standard (Section 508 or WCAG) that each recipient follows. ACB also urged HUD to expand the supply of accessible housing by extending residential accessibility requirements under Section 504 to include conversions of commercial facilities into multi-family developments, which are currently excluded under the Fair Housing Act, and requested that HUD require recipients to post on their websites and other printed materials the total number of units that meet the additional 5% units required for physical mobility and the additional 2% for persons with hearing and vision disabilities. In addition, ACB urged HUD to increase the minimum number of accessible units that housing providers must have from 5 percent for physical access and 2 for hearing/visual access.

# **Dining Out While Blind**

An in-depth article by Eater discusses what it’s like to eat out while blind. The article mentions that "The biggest problem for a blind diner has very little to do with any mechanical or logistical difficulty of blindness, and instead centers on the condescending, exclusionary, or simply ignorant attitudes and behaviors of sighted people. The first challenge is just getting through the front door: Despite the fact that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) explicitly protects disabled people’s right to bring service animals into restaurants, blind people are frequently denied entry by workers who are unaware of the law and categorically reject the presence of any animal. But once they’re actually admitted into a restaurant, an extensive menu of microaggressions still awaits the blind diner. Servers frequently speak to blind people in a loud voice, on the inexplicable but commonplace assumption that somehow a lack of vision also implies a hearing difficulty." [Read the full article by Eater](https://www.eater.com/23798167/restaurant-menu-accessibility-blind-dining-in-the-dark).

# **M-Enabling Summit Accessibility Workshops**

ACB will be attending this year’s M-Enabling Summit in

Washington, D.C. from October 10-12. This annual event brings together thought leaders in the field of digital accessibility to discuss the latest technologies and strategies for creating accessible digital experiences. During the summit, the International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP) will be offering high-level, in-depth accessibility workshops. [Learn more about the IAAP Accessibility Workshops](https://g3ict.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=c9e95602d3d7209e71c920bfa&id=c490b58bf6&e=2e6a2c5818). Find out more about what this conference has to offer and register at [M-Enabling.com](http://m-enabling.com/).