STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Arkansas House Newsletter

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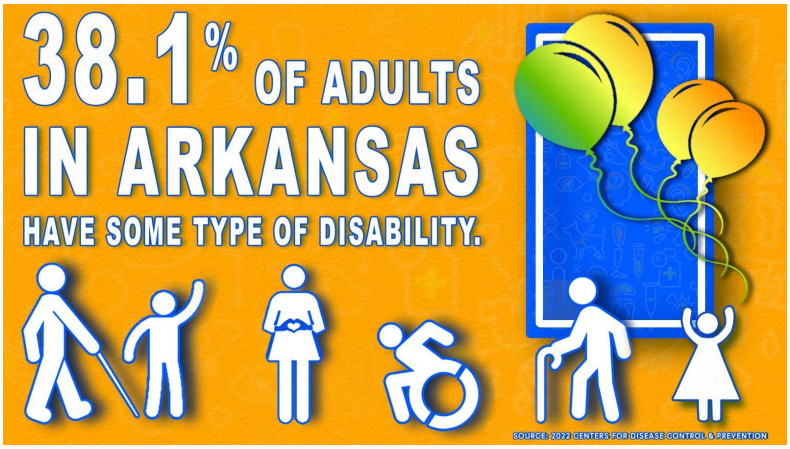
Improving Access in Arkansas



This week, the House Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs Committee received updates on the ongoing efforts by state agencies to enhance accessibility in their facilities for individuals with disabilities.

In 2022, Arkansas State Parks initiated a collaboration with the non-profit organization Accessibility Across Arkansas to enhance access to state parks for individuals with disabilities. This partnership marked the beginning of a series of significant steps to make outdoor experiences more inclusive.

By 2024, Arkansas State Parks had acquired its first Action Trackchair for Logoly State Park in Columbia County. The initiative didn't stop there. Accessibility Across Arkansas secured a grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation to purchase an additional Trackchair. Concurrently, Arkansas State Parks obtained a Trackchair from the National Association of State Park Directors-Bronco Wild Fund. These efforts underscore a strong commitment to improving mobility in natural settings.

Furthermore, in 2024, Arkansas State Parks became the first U.S. state park system to partner with Becoming rentALBE, certifying accessible lodging accommodations.

To sustain these improvements, the Division of State Parks has established an accessibility working group. This group is dedicated to exploring best practices to meet the needs of all guests, ensuring that progress continues in the right direction.

Additionally, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission offers mobility-impaired access permits. Permit holders can use ATVs on Commission-owned wildlife management areas along designated mobility-impaired access trails, enhancing access to Arkansas's diverse wildlife and natural habitats.

In the realm of education, the General Assembly passed Act 987 in 2021, mandating public school districts to include specific accessibility measures in their facilities master plans by February 1, 2024.

These requirements include:
-Performing an assessment of public school facilities for ADA compliance, focusing on buildings constructed before 2004.
-Develop a transition plan outlining the necessary steps to ensure ADA compliance.

Open-enrollment public charter schools are also required to submit the same assessment and transition plan by the same deadline. An online professional learning course has been created to assist public school districts and charter schools in conducting these assessments.

These comprehensive efforts by various state agencies reflect a robust commitment to making Arkansas more accessible for all its residents and visitors. You can review the committee meeting presentations at arkansashouse.org.