

# Resources to Assist with Physical Accessibility in Your Church

## Assessment Tool for all areas including physical accessibility:

National Catholic Partnership provides an assessment tool to help parishes utilize a tool to help guide them in the development and evaluation of programs, materials and/or other resources for use in the Church, relative to accessibility or usability for all persons. The four areas include Language, Accessibility (physical, social, learning) Meaningful Participation and Belonging.

[https://ncpd.org/files/resources-toolkits/LAMB\\_Assessment\\_Key\\_English.pdf](https://ncpd.org/files/resources-toolkits/LAMB_Assessment_Key_English.pdf)

## Financial Resources:

1. [Meyrow Foundation](#) has grants available to churches with members who are directly living with Parkinson's disease. The grant funding can assist with the cost of updating and improving physical accessibility in the persons church and in their home. Information on the [Parkinson's Wellness Fund Grants](#) is available. Contact is Russell Meyerowitz [russell@themeyrowfoundation.org](mailto:russell@themeyrowfoundation.org)
2. [Vermeer Charitable Foundation](#) from Vermeer in Pella. The [grant guidelines](#) are available. Guidelines include VCF focus is on programs with an emphasis on process improvement –with a lesser passion for building programs; supports elect Christian, faith-based and educational causes and grants made to non-profit organizations, primarily in the Pella area and other communities from which or team members commute. They receive more requests for funds than they are able to grant, but have done grants to communities throughout Iowa outside their local area.
3. [Koch Foundation Inc.](#) A parish in our diocese received a \$45,000 grant from them in recent years not necessarily related to capital expenditures.
4. [Community Facilities Programs | Rural Development Direct Loan and Grant \(usda.gov\)](#) Non-profit religious organizations could potentially qualify for loan/grant as long as the church was also providing services to the public such as a childcare services, community gardens/kitchens, food banks/pantry, healthcare services or private schools, etc.
5. [Invest DSM](#) for Des Moines metro churches. Mission is to provide holistic and innovative solutions that strengthen neighborhoods. They do this work through strategic investments in real estate and partnerships to improve quality of life.

[Commercial Business Programs](#)

### CHRISTOPHER CIVITATE

Neighborhood Development Manager

515-221-8410 Ext. 103 (Office)

515-221-8519 (Fax)

6. [Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity](#) serves Polk, Dallas, and Jasper Counties through a [home preservation](#) program that includes critical repairs, weatherization, and accessibility services. They are open to discussion on leveraging this program to serve local parishes. Assistance with ramps, grab bars, new steps, accessible restrooms, etc. so that people can be active in their community. Habitat does not charge for labor but does require volunteer involvement in each preservation project. Grant funding to support the projects may be available. Contact Jenna Ekstrom [jennaekstrom@gdmhabitat.org](mailto:jennaekstrom@gdmhabitat.org) for more information. For other counties in southwest Iowa please contact Jenna to be introduced to Habitat for Humanity in your area to see if they would be open to similar type projects.

**Diocese of Des Moines Disability Ministry**  
515-237-5073 [www.dmdiocese.org/disabilityministry](http://www.dmdiocese.org/disabilityministry)



7. [Iowa Knights of Columbus](#): Knights of Columbus Council may have funding and physical assistance available to assist with physical accessibility projects at a parish. Your local Council can also connect with the District Council contact for additional support and potential funding.

## Planning Assistance

1. [Great Plains A.D.A .Center](#)

Ryan Smith, Consultant

Phone: 573-882-6999

- The Great Plains A.D.A .Center provides information, guidance and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act and related laws to the service region of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. Our services are designed to meet the needs of a wide range of users, from individuals with disabilities and their families to architects, building code officials, educators, state and local governments, and businesses. We combine expertise on A.D.A. guidelines and regulations with years of hands-on experience to provide services that are effective, targeted and user-friendly.
- We provide informal guidance on the A.D.A., including help understanding the standards and how they apply to various entities. We can offer guidance on what is required for accessibility, and also provide some recommendations for independent contractors who can assess your situation at your facilities. Resources for funding is something we can check into as they do exist but are few and far between.
- We are experts on the A.D.A., which is a minimum set of standards. There are some issues of accessibility that the standards don't quite cover, for example, that the required clear floor space for a wheelchair is 48 inches, but many motorized mobility devices require 54 inches, which is above the requirements set by the A.D.A. So, while we can get you started on ensuring your spaces are accessible, there may be further considerations to fully ensure all individuals have access.

2. [National Seating and Mobility](#)

- Iowa contact is Adam Pender [Adam.pender@nsm-seating.com](mailto:Adam.pender@nsm-seating.com) 515-577-2899.
- Can give recommendations on vertical platform lifts (no giant closing doors) or if you need elevator, stair lifts, ramps.
- If you can send photos, he can usually give you a ball park prices.
- Will also bid the work if you decide to do a project.

3. [A.D.A. Checklist for Existing Facilities](#) A very concise resource for understanding the accessibility code and could allow parishes to conduct some of their own accessibility review. This resource is much easier to understand and utilize than trying to go directly to the A.D.A. Guidelines.

4. [Access for Everyone, A Guide to the Accessibility of Buildings & Sites](#) which is authored by Dr. Arvid E. Osterberg, a Design Professor at the I.S.U. College of Design. Access for Everyone provides Basic information about building and site accessibility. Here is a link to the free version, otherwise it can also be purchased on Amazon.

5. Architecture/Engineer firms are available to provide consulting services on A.D.A. requirements.

6. Potential Vendors to consider:

- [Access Elevators and Lifts, Inc.](#) Offer and install stair/wheelchair lifts, elevators or portable lifts from the most respected industry manufacturers.
- [NuCara Home Medical Home Modifications](#) is an Accessible Home Improvement of American Association member and can help to modify structures and install assistive devices such as lifts, ramps, grabbers, accessible showers. 1801 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Des Moines, IA 50314 Phone: 515-246-2027 Clayton Bentley [cbentley@nucara.com](mailto:cbentley@nucara.com) . Covers southwest Iowa or can refer you to another division in your area.

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- [101Mobility](#) provides vertical platforms, elevators, lifts, ramps and accessible bathroom remodels. 515-293-5726
  - [Central States Mobility](#) 515-528-2013 Nigel Chapman [nigel@centralstatesmobility.com](mailto:nigel@centralstatesmobility.com) C.S.M. Installs aluminum ramps and stair lifts.
  - Contact the Industrial tech department at a local high school or community college to inquire if they would be interested in a project like this. Boy scouts, Lions Club, Rotary or other service groups may build ramps in your area.
  - Contact medical supply companies/home health care agencies to find out if temporary ramps are available for rent or purchase.
  - [Easterseals Iowa Assistive Technology Center](#) has a “classified ads site” for people to post disability equipment for sale. There may happen to be a ramp or other items that may be what you are looking for. Or check out Craig’s List, Facebook marketplace, or other local buy/sell/trade sites on-line to potentially find an item.
  - [United Way’s 2-1-1](#): Call 211, search website, text or use [Iowa211 app](#) to access a clearinghouse of services, and they may be able to tell you of someone in your local area who builds ramps.
7. [Wheelchair Ramp Accessibility Program WRAP of Iowa](#) has Accessibility Ramp Design and Construction Guideline document available that they use when building ramps for someone wanting to build their own ramp. Copy of most recent guidelines available from Coordinator of Persons with Disability Ministry.

## Accessible Signage

Companies in Iowa that are reputable in providing signage that meets ADA requirements are listed below. They can help you meet A.D.A. and also state and local requirements to also meet fire department requirements. They can come to your buildings and or look at building lay out maps to help you improve signage to be more welcoming to ALL.

[American Marking Inc.](#) (Des Moines)

[CR Signs](#) (Cedar Rapids)

## Additional Assistance

For additional input and assistance on the above topics, please contact:

Norm Bormann, Director of Property Management and Safety, Diocese of Des Moines

515-229-8008 | [NBormann@dmdiocese.org](mailto:NBormann@dmdiocese.org)

