



ADA at Historic Sites

How to make historic
buildings and
programs accessible to
all





Introduction

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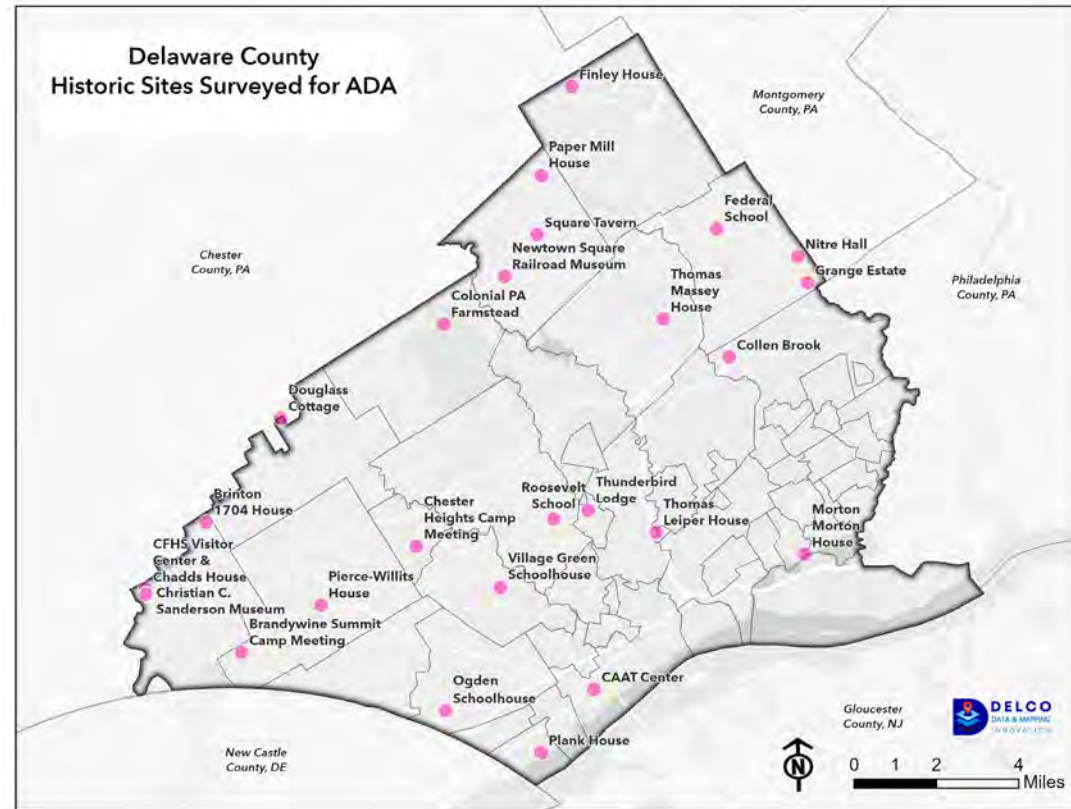
- Delaware County is home to over 30 historical sites that are open to the public, representing the County's history from the earliest European settlement to the foundations of the Industrial Revolution
- Most of the sites are volunteer-run and all depend on visitors for sustaining the buildings, programs, and organizations at the sites
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was first published in 1990 and updated in 2010
- The project was created to assist the owners and organizations managing publicly accessible historic sites to make the buildings more inclusive and ready to accept visitors, especially to prepare for the upcoming Semiquincentennial in 2026

Background

- The 2010 *ADA Standards for Accessible Design* (2010 Standards) are enforceable accessibility standards for newly designed and constructed or altered government facilities, public accommodations, and commercial facilities to ensure that they are usable by individuals with disabilities
- Historic sites are not 'grandfathered' and do need to comply with the ADA
- There have been legal cases in which sites have been sued for not being ADA compliant.
- Historic sites are meant to be open to all visitors, and having an accessible site ensures that all are welcome

- Not accommodating people with disabilities limits the number of visitors that may want to visit the site
- Disabilities may take many forms, some of which are not readily visible to other people, including limited mobility, sight, hearing, or cognitive ability
- According to the 2020 census, Delaware County has a population of 576,830. 18% (103,829 people) are over 65 and 8.4% (48,453 people) of people under 65 have a disability

27 Delaware County Historic Sites Received Accessibility Audits



Accessibility Audits of Historic Sites

- Checklist, photos, recommendations given to each site
- Recommendations can be incorporated into future maintenance and upgrades
- Many suggestions are easily remedied with existing resources

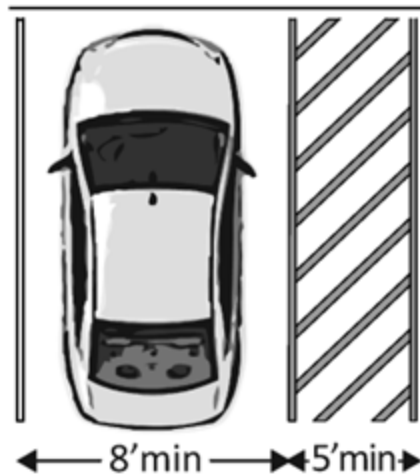




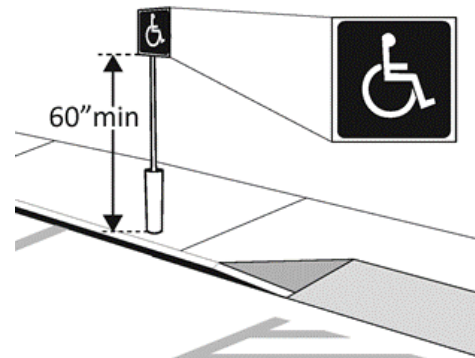
Guidelines

Site- Parking

Guidelines



Car accessible space



Accessible sign requirement

Delco site example- Chadds Ford Historical Society



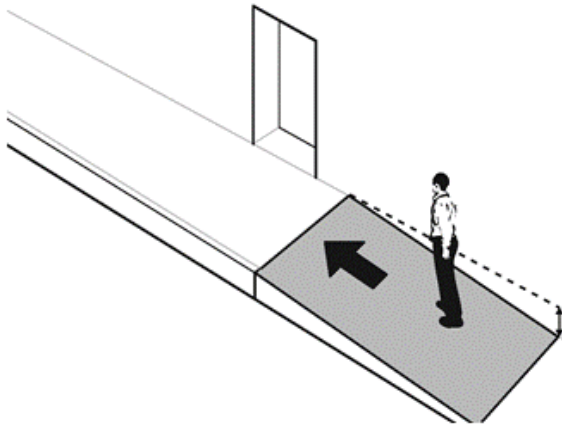
Gravel lot with accessible spots adjacent to accessible path

Site- Paths

Guidelines



Paths should be 36" wide or temporarily narrow to 32" if necessary



Running slope should be no more than 1:20 (2.86°). If it is greater than 1:20, it should be treated as a ramp.

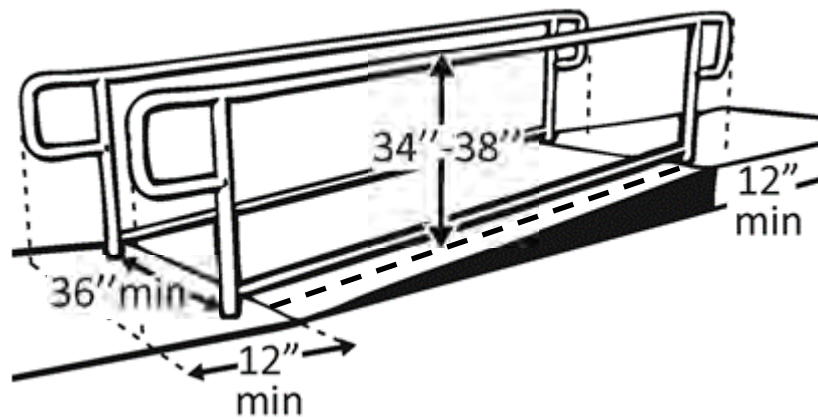
Delco site example- Morton Morton House, Norwood



Stone path is being replaced with a fundraising brick path

Site- Ramps

Guidelines



Width and height requirements of the ramp and handrails

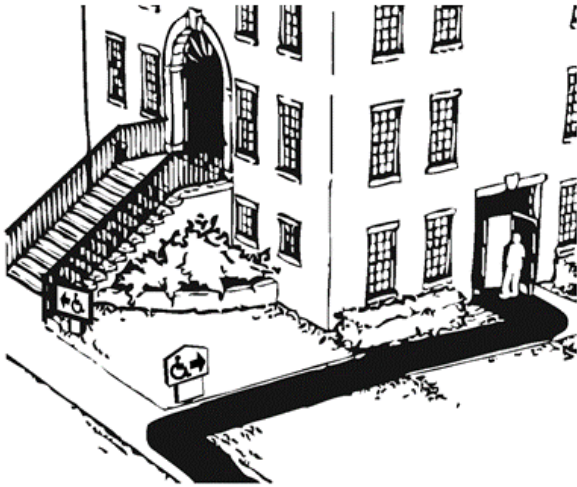
Delco site example- Thornbury Historical Society



Ramp with level landing and access to parking

Entrances

Guidelines



Alternative entrances should be on the rear or sides and have signs directing visitors



Beveled thresholds– note the vertical portion should be no more than 1/4" high

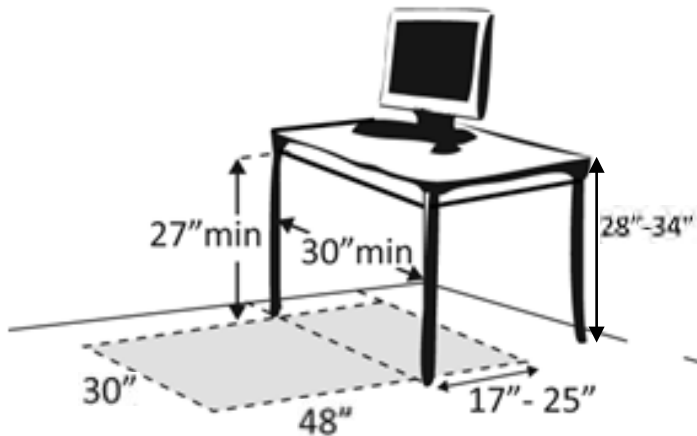
Delco site example- Grange Estate



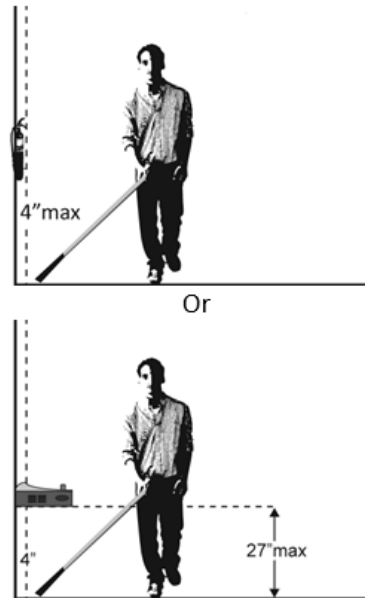
Additional threshold to make the kitchen accessible, mats with rubber backing

Interiors

Guidelines



Tables and desks should be able to accommodate wheelchair users



Objects in circulation paths should be along walls

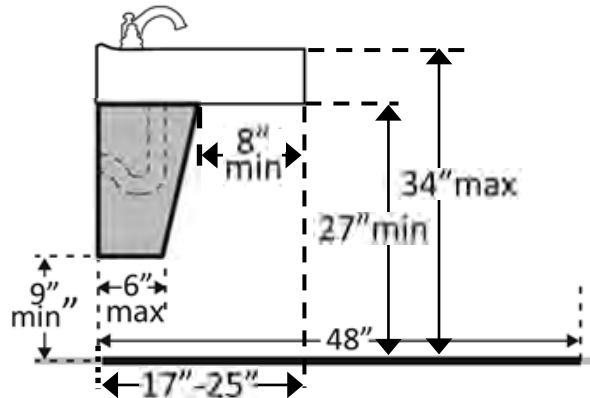
Delco site example- Chadds Ford Historical Society



Researchers in the library can use movable seating and compliant tables

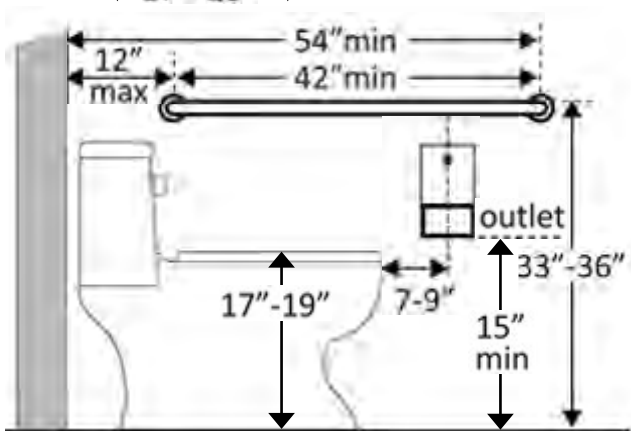
Restrooms

Guidelines



Sinks should have:

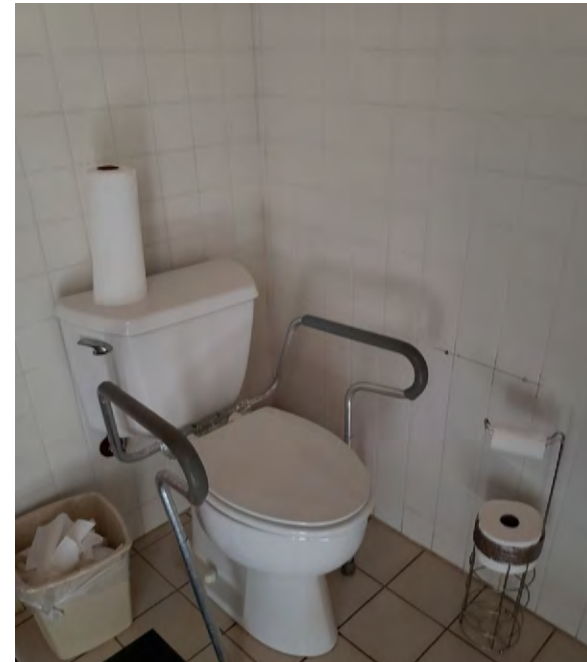
- Correct height to allow for leg and toe room
- Clear approach of 48"
- Covered pipes to avoid scalding



Toilets should have:

- Appropriate seat height
- Side grab bar (1 1/2" diameter) at correct length and height
- Toilet paper dispenser at reasonable distance from toilet and floor

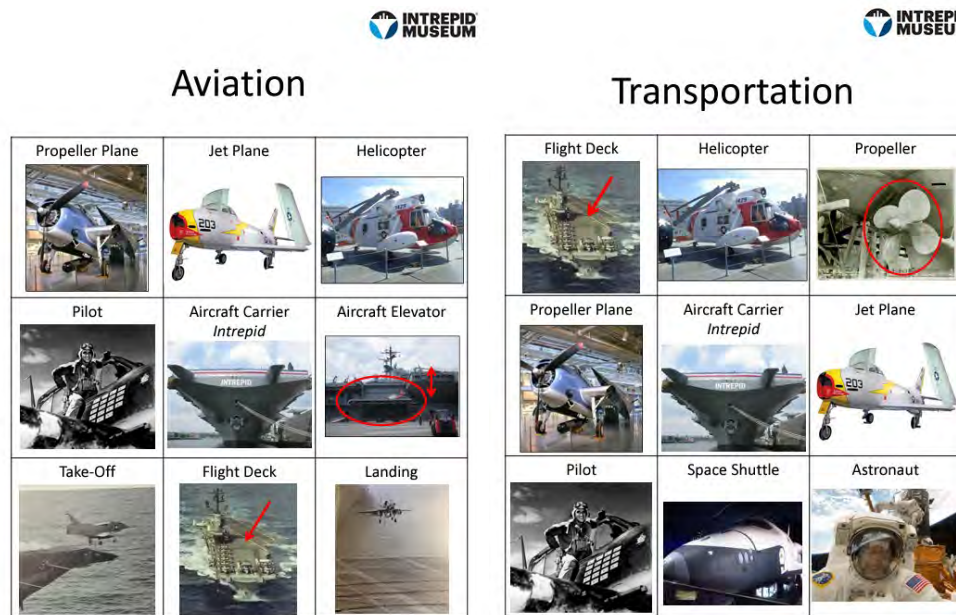
Delco site example- Brandywine Summit Camp Meeting



Prior to renovation, the accessible restroom had a portable grab bar, a reasonable alternative for historic sites

Non-mobility- Autism/Sensory

National Example- Intrepid Museum, NY



Visual Vocabularies give visitors a sense of what to expect and introduce new words

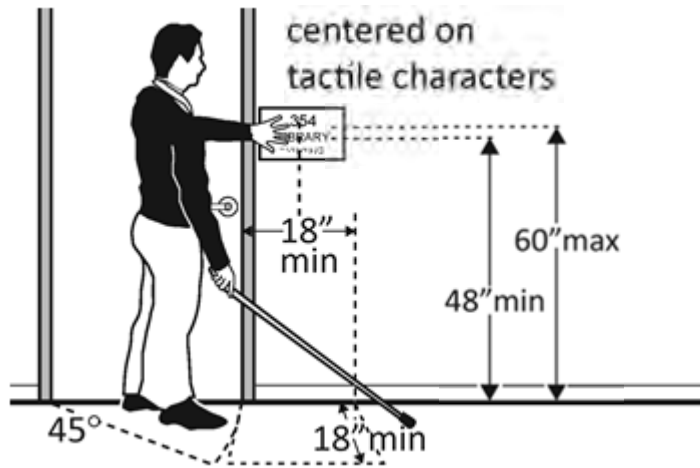
Delco site example- Brandywine River Museum of Art



Visitors with sensory processing disorders may use free packs during visits

Blind/low-vision

Guidelines



Signs for rooms should be located next to the open side of the door

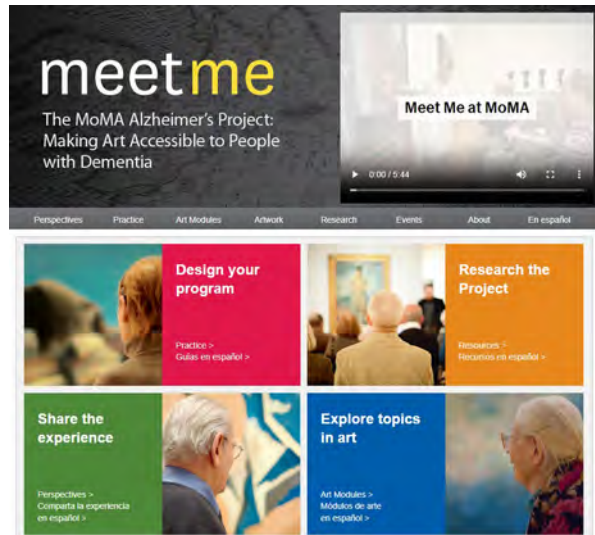
Delco site example- Middletown Township Historical Society



The restrooms at the Roosevelt Community Center have tactile restroom signs

Dementia/ Alzheimer's/ Trauma

National Example- Museum of Modern Art, NY



An initiative from 2007-2014 although the resources are still available and useful for arts and health professionals and caregivers

Delco site example- Chichester Historical Society

[These questions were provided by Chichester Historical Society, so substitute UCT or other references to Upper Chichester with your own area

BASIC QUESTIONS

What is your full name?
Where did your family live when you were born?
When did you move to UCT? Why?
What was your schooling like? How did you get to school? Which schools did you attend?
Did/do you attend any of the churches in UCT?
When and where did you get married?
Who were your earliest family members that lived in UCT?
When and where did they live?
Do you remember hearing them describe their lives? What did they say?
How is UCT different now from when you were a child?
Who was your family doctor? Where was the office located?
Do you remember the construction of the B&O Railroad bridge on Chi Ave? I-95? Rt. 322?

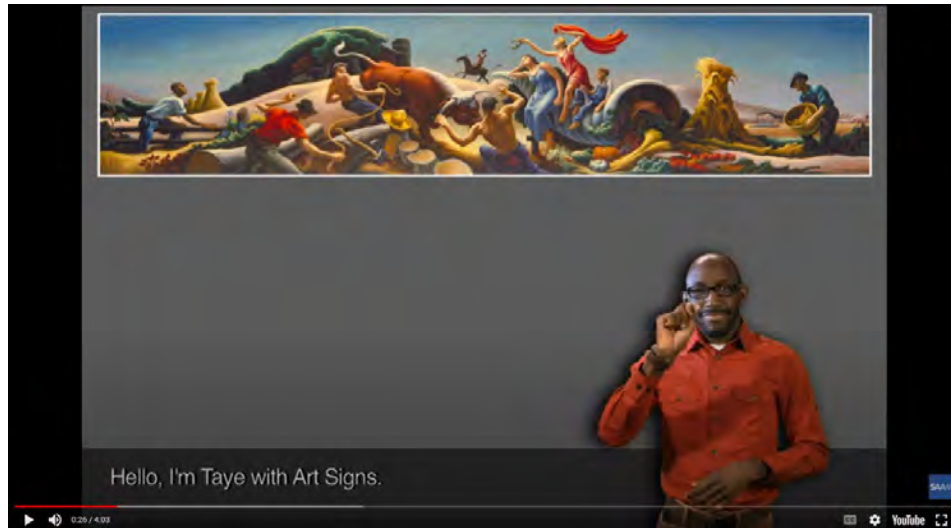
NEIGHBORHOOD

How did you identify your neighborhood?

An Oral History Questionnaire is available on the DCHPN website

d/Deaf

National Example- Smithsonian American Art Museum, DC



Art Signs features 30-minute gallery talks presented by deaf gallery guides in American Sign Language (ASL).

Delco site example- Concord Twp Historical Society



Displays at the Pierce Willits House have interpretive panels and objects

Off-site- Websites

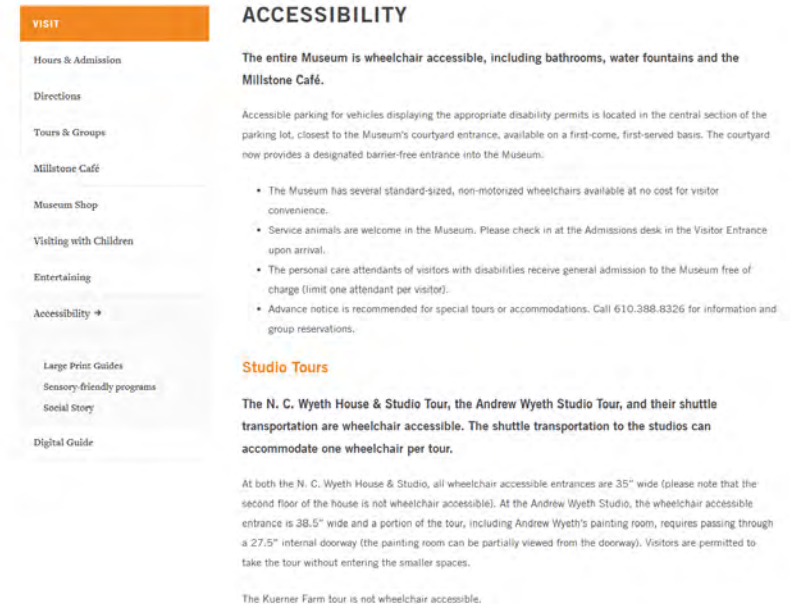
Resources available



The banner for AccessWorks features a man with sunglasses holding a smartphone. The text reads: "Connecting *businesses* to users with *disabilities*". Below this, there are two buttons: "SIGN UP YOUR BUSINESS" and "BECOME A TESTER". At the bottom, it says "In partnership with..." followed by logos for Knowbility and userzoom. The tagline "Web usability made easy." is centered below the logos. A small disclaimer at the bottom states: "Large or small businesses, nonprofits, educational institutions, state and local government agencies: use our accessibility expertise and our network of test participants with disabilities to test your website!"

Companies like Access Works connect businesses and nonprofits to website testers with disabilities

Delco site example- Brandywine River Museum of Art



The page is titled "ACCESSIBILITY" and is part of a website with a "VISIT" tab. The "VISIT" tab contains links to: Hours & Admission, Directions, Tours & Groups, Millstone Café, Museum Shop, Visiting with Children, Entertaining, Accessibility (with a dropdown arrow), Large Print Guides, Sensory-friendly programs, Social Story, and Digital Guide. The "ACCESSIBILITY" section contains the following text:

The entire Museum is wheelchair accessible, including bathrooms, water fountains and the Millstone Café.

Accessible parking for vehicles displaying the appropriate disability permits is located in the central section of the parking lot, closest to the Museum's courtyard entrance, available on a first-come, first-served basis. The courtyard now provides a designated barrier-free entrance into the Museum.

- The Museum has several standard-sized, non-motorized wheelchairs available at no cost for visitor convenience.
- Service animals are welcome in the Museum. Please check in at the Admissions desk in the Visitor Entrance upon arrival.
- The personal care attendants of visitors with disabilities receive general admission to the Museum free of charge (limit one attendant per visitor).
- Advance notice is recommended for special tours or accommodations. Call 610.398.8326 for information and group reservations.

Studio Tours

The N. C. Wyeth House & Studio Tour, the Andrew Wyeth Studio Tour, and their shuttle transportation are wheelchair accessible. The shuttle transportation to the studios can accommodate one wheelchair per tour.

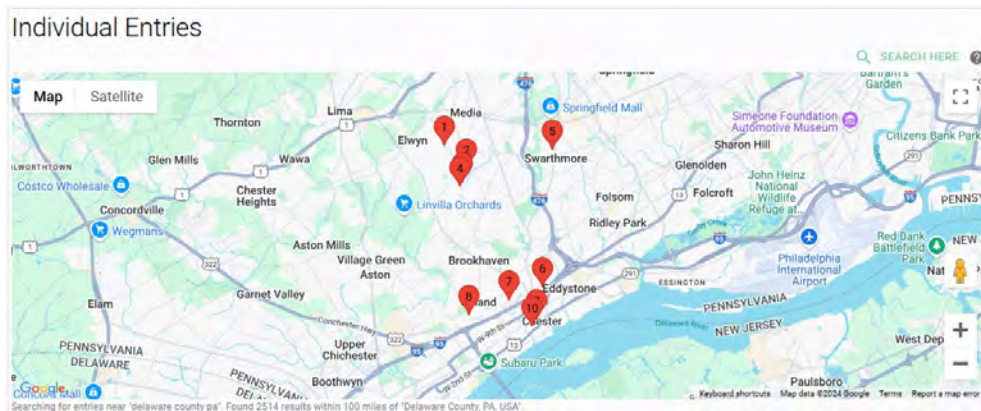
At both the N. C. Wyeth House & Studio, all wheelchair accessible entrances are 35" wide (please note that the second floor of the house is not wheelchair accessible). At the Andrew Wyeth Studio, the wheelchair accessible entrance is 38.5" wide and a portion of the tour, including Andrew Wyeth's painting room, requires passing through a 27.5" internal doorway (the painting room can be partially viewed from the doorway). Visitors are permitted to take the tour without entering the smaller spaces.

The Kuerner Farm tour is not wheelchair accessible.

The Museum has a tab on their website for accessibility

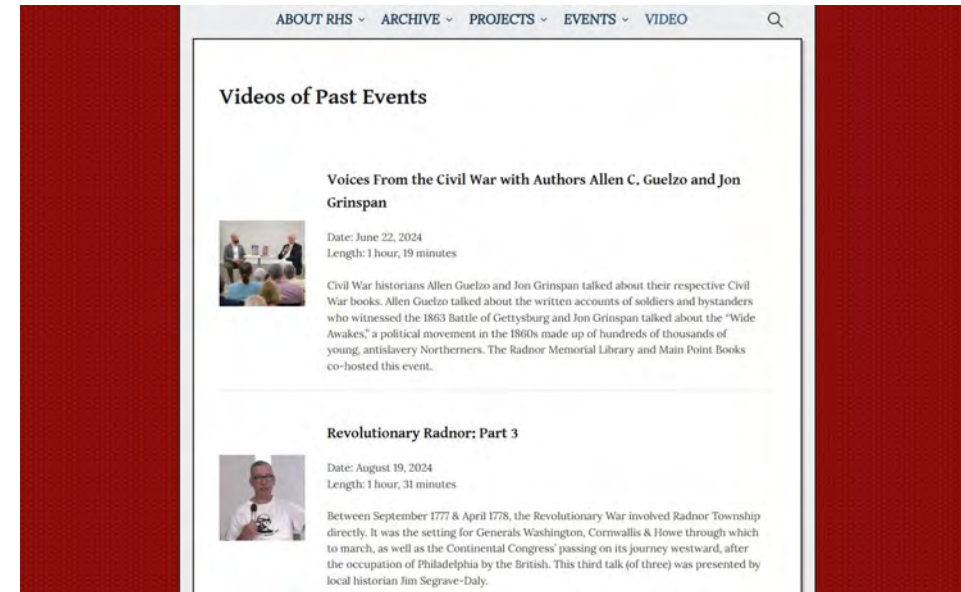
Videos/ Virtual Tours

National example- theclio.com



The Clio website and app have multiple cultural and historical sites that can be combined to create walking or driving tours– regional or thematic. Sites can upload videos and/or audio, and text can be read out loud.

Delco site example- Radnor Historical Society



Radnor Historical Society posts all of their videos of past events on their website

Portable Exhibits

National example- Brick Store Museum, ME



The Mobile Exhibits Program places exhibits at various accessible locations in the city

Delco site example- Newtown Historical Society



The Paper Mill House & Museum has a sign in their parking lot with information about the historical society and museum



Audits

Audit Checklist Kit

Measuring tape



Push-pull door pressure gauge (for doors and restrooms)



Digital angle measurer (Bubble Level, Spirit Level phone app)



Exteriors

All numbers are out of 27 sites unless otherwise noted

Accessible Parking Spaces	25	
Accessible Parking Signs	4	
Stable routes	24	
Wide (36") Routes	21	Good
Stable ramps (out of 13)	12	Needs Improvement
Wide (36") Ramps (out of 13)	8	Unsatisfactory
Correct Ramp Slope (out of 13)	3	
Correct Handrails (out of 12)	2	
Correct Door Width (32")	23	
Correct Door Hardware	9	

Interiors

All numbers are out of 27 sites unless otherwise noted

Accessible Entrance to Main Floor	19	
All public spaces on route	15	
Stable routes	27	
Wide (36") Routes	24	Good
Elevators? (out of 19)	1*	Needs Improvement
Signs Correct?	1	Unsatisfactory
Correct Interior Door Width (32") (out of 17)	12*	
Light Switches correct? (out of 19)	6	

It is not recommended to make drastic changes like elevators and widening doorways except in rare cases

Restrooms

All numbers are out of 22 sites unless otherwise noted

Accessible Restroom?	15	
Signs at inaccessible restrooms? (out of 6*)	2	
Accessible Route to Restroom? (out of 19)	15	
Correct Bathroom Door Width (32")	13	Good
Threshold correct? (out of 15)	11	Needs Improvement
Door hardware correct?	8	Unsatisfactory
Door open easily?	16	
Sinks correct?	11	
Toilets correct?	11	

6 locations had more than one restroom, some of which complied

Other

Priority 4 includes water fountains, pay phones, and fire alarms. Only fire alarms were relevant in all sites

Fire alarm has light and sound? 7

Most just had smoke alarms

Video

2 had videos to play for visitors at accessible location

1 had video planned

Ramp

11 have need for permanent or temporary ramp for events



Resources

You are not alone!

- Many organizations locally and nationally are dealing with the same accessibility issues that you have at your site.
- Read the recommendations provided by DCPD after your audit
- Talk with your municipality and board how to best implement them
- Apply for grants, work with local disability groups, attend training
- When implementing any change to your site, keep accessibility in mind
- Invite people with disabilities to visit and get their feedback (you can use your current membership, local nursing home, or senior center)
- If you did not receive an audit, or need a revisit, contact Kate