

**State Bar of Arizona Task Force on Persons With Disabilities  
Accessibility Committee Site Visit  
City of Scottsdale Justice Court Facility  
Scottsdale, Arizona**

**SURVEY BACKGROUND**

**Facility:** City of Scottsdale Justice Court, address, Scottsdale Arizona

**Date:** April 23, 2004

**Team:** James B. Reed (Jaburg & Wilk, P.C.) (team leader); Carrie Sherman (Arizona State Bar Association), Emily Johnston, (Arizona State Bar Board of Governors), Judy Reichman, (member of the public); Fred Diaz (attorney member of the Bar).

**Court Personnel:** Milli Lee, Loss Prevention Consultant, Maricopa County Occupation, Safety and Health Division; Mary Martinez, Chief Clerk; Georgeana Meeks, Court Clerk's Office/Administration/Services.



## **Overview**

This facility is a municipal Justice Court for the City of Scottsdale, Arizona. It is a relatively new structure, which will be absorbed into the new Northeast Judicial Facility shortly. It was extremely functional for accessibility. The team, which included an individual with mobility challenges, did not observe any significant access-related issues for persons with disabilities. Court administrators and personnel are aware of issues pertaining to access for persons with disabilities. Specific observations follow.

## **Parking**

Parking is extensive and sufficient. Sufficient numbers of accessible parking spaces exist, with proper signage and cut curbs to the entry sidewalk.

## **Entrances and Exits**

The main entrance did not have an automatic door opener. The tile floors are extremely convenient for persons using a wheelchair, but could present a potentially slick surface for persons with canes or crutches, under circumstances not present when the team visited, such as spilled liquids, etc. “Roughed up” tiles surfaces present a safe, accessible compromise.



The Clerk's Counter had a special, accessible counter height with removable chair for persons using a wheelchair or scooter.



The emergency exit had a crash bar door, which is preferable to a door handle, either knob or latch.



### **Pamphlet and Informational Services**

There are no pamphlets currently available describing services for persons with disabilities. Evacuation plans are prominently posted on each floor and are color-coded for ease of use and reference. Administrative staff act to assist members of the public, including persons with disabilities, during any evacuation.

### **Restrooms**

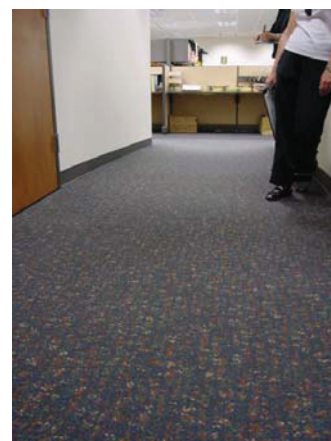
The team surveyed the restrooms in the courthouse on the main floor and in the jury deliberation room. All restrooms seemed accessible with no significant issues or concerns noted. For male restrooms, this included a urinal at lower height, important for users of wheelchairs. The accessible stalls were extremely large and convenient. The counters were accessible with appropriate pipe wraps. Placement of soap dispensers is a consideration upon any remodeling, with our recommendation of sidewall placement to permit persons using wheelchairs or with low height, to reach the dispensers without excess soap materials falling on the floor and creating

slippery surfaces. A second towel dispenser over the trash dispenser was easily used, which offset that the counter dispenser was slightly high for a person using a wheelchair.



### **Hallways and Lobbies**

All hallways were very wide, with many chairs. The court staff area was very functional for employees with disabilities.



The water fountains were at wheelchair height, and were functional.





Braille signage was observed throughout the structure. Even the janitor's closet had Braille signage.



## Elevators

There is no elevator, as the building is single story.

## Law Library

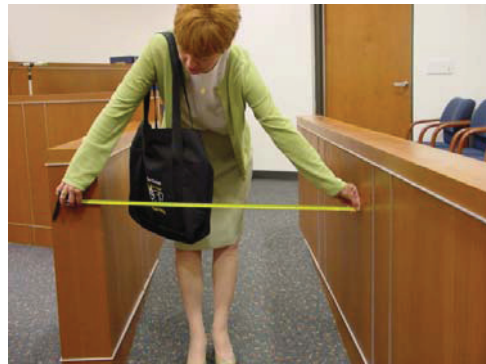
There is no law library, with judicial staff using electronic research facilities at their desks.

## Courtrooms

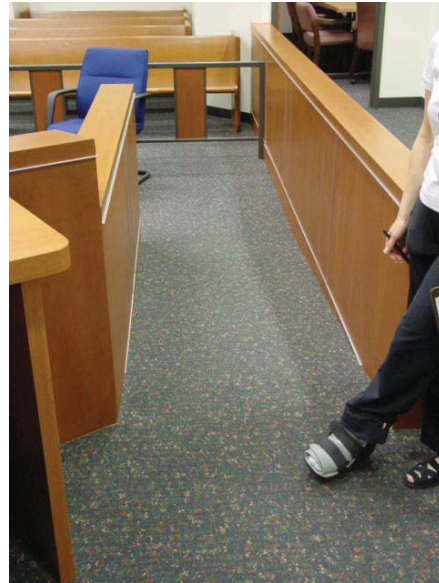
### Courtroom facilities



Both courtrooms are located on the ground floor in this single-story building. The courtrooms are very accessible to members of the judiciary and public. The courtroom design is one of the best observed, particularly for a justice court. A ramp leads to the witness stand, and jury box, with a wall and railing on the “well side” of the ramp. While the well-side retainer wall made the ramp safe from falls, it had a limited width, posing passability challenges for some wheelchairs.

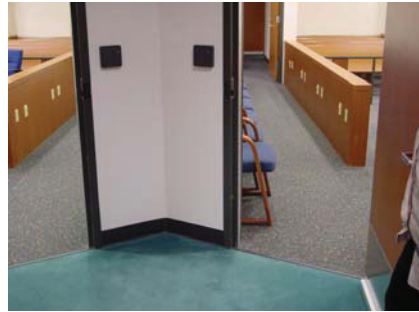


There was no swinging gate separating the public gallery from the courtroom well, the absence of which is more convenient for persons with mobility challenges. The jury box had only removable chairs, which would easily accommodate a wheelchair. The witness box had a removable chair, which accommodated wheelchairs.



For any juror or witness requiring hearing assistance, the court has wireless headphones. All courtrooms are set up for hearing assistance.

The two courtrooms share a single wall, and are mirror opposite configurations. This permits both courtrooms to use the same jury deliberation room. The deliberation room is fully accessible, as is its restroom.



The public gallery includes substantial space for wheelchairs on one side of the gallery area. Counsel's table appeared to be at a functionally correct height for use by any attorney using a wheelchair.

Remarkably, the Judge's benches in both courtrooms had fully-automated wheelchair lifts. They functioned well upon testing.





Public access to courtrooms appeared to be relatively easy. The large handles were negotiable for individuals using wheelchairs. There were no automatic door openers, but the doors seemed to open relatively easily.

### **Juror Facilities**

The jury assembly room opens on the first floor. It is entirely accessible. There is easy access for a wheelchair and also for any other device used to assist mobility.

The jury assembly room is accessible via a ramp, with accessible latch handles. The bathroom inside was very accessible, with a sink with appropriate pipe wraps, and easily accessible soap and towel dispensers. The assembly table was surrounded by caster chairs, easily moved for persons with mobility challenges.

There are television monitors inside the jury assembly room, which are used, in part, for informational purposes. The jury restroom was fully accessible.



### **Chambers**

There was ample room for any member of staff or visiting lawyer or member of the public to maneuver in a wheelchair or move with a walking device.

### **General Observations**

All public signs in the building that the team observed were imprinted with Braille code. Consistent with any budget demands, some consideration may be given to publishing a pamphlet for members of the public or those in the legal profession having disabilities.

The inclusion of the Justice Court in the Northeast Judicial Facility should eliminate any concerns regarding accessibility.

## CONCLUSION

The Scottsdale Justice Court is an accessible building, both in its main areas of public use and in its courtrooms. Personnel responsible for administering the facility seemed informed and appreciative of the needs of persons with disabilities. Any accessibility challenges should be resolved with the inclusion of the Justice Court in the Northeast Judicial Facility.

