- [Page] Hello and thank you for spending some time learning about the Americans with Disabilities Act. My name is Page Eastin, I'm a Disability Program Coordinator at Iowa Workforce Development.

The ADA was signed into law in 1990 and protects the rights of people against discrimination on the basis of disability. Former U.S. Senator from Iowa, Tom Harkin, said that the ADA is nothing less than an emancipation proclamation for people with disabilities. There are five titles of the ADA and this training will focus on Title II, which requires public entities and contractors operating services on their behalf to comply with the ADA. This applies to anything that a public entity does. A public entity is any state or local government regardless of size, any department, agency or instrumentality of a state or local government, and certain authorities in AMTRAK. All programs, activities and services provided through an American Jobs Center fall under Title II. All public entities must conduct self-assessments to ensure equal access. This includes physical accessibility, program accessibility, and the provision of reasonable accommodations.

So why is this important that we do this? Well, it's the law to help meet the needs of a growing, aging population, to provide equal access to people with disabilities seeking services, to educate and empower customers with disabilities, and to help us provide better customer service to everyone. It's also important to decrease the disparity. Americans with disabilities have a lower level of educational attainment than those without disabilities. One out of five adults with disabilities compared to less than one of 10 adults without disabilities have graduated from high school. Americans with disabilities are also less financially stable and more likely to be unemployed than those without disabilities. Unemployment rates are much higher for people with disabilities than without. And too many Americans with disabilities remain outside the economic and social mainstream of life. For example, 71% of people without disabilities own homes, but fewer than 10% of people with disabilities do.

Ensuring physical accessibility means assessing the environment and removing barriers. This includes areas of the public accesses like parking lots, sidewalks, doorways, computer stations, and restrooms. Looking at the placement of office equipment and furniture is especially important, as those can change over time. A program is a service or activity undertaken by a department that affords benefits, information, opportunities, or activities to one or more members of the public. Again, this includes programs, services and activities carried out by contractors or grantees on behalf of the state agencies, as well as those state agencies.

There's another training module totally focused on the provision of accommodations in one-stop centers, but to provide a very high-level overview, we're required to provide accommodations and make those known in our policies and public notices, on our websites and materials. And that every program, service or activity we provide has the opportunity for individuals to request accommodations in order to participate. We also want to ensure that people know how to request accommodations, and that we develop a process for responding to our customers' request, and train staff accordingly. As you'll learn from the training module on accommodations, there are resources available to help identify things that might help people. And this includes a resource called the Job Accommodation Network, which you can visit by going to www.askjan.com (correction [www.askjan.org](http://www.askjan.org))

You may also hear the term universal design. This is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. Basically, when it works for an individual with a disability it will work for everyone. Again, please reference the training on reasonable accommodations, and if you have any questions, feel free to contact me.