

Baffled By ADA? Experts can help

Resources are available to help business owners find out if they comply with disability access rules — and what to do if they don't.

A 2003 state law created a program to train and test “certified access specialists.” These experts inspect buildings and business sites for compliance with construction-related standards. A list of nearly 600 access specialists statewide is available at bizj.us/1ie5qs.

Costs vary by the type of business and location, but run from \$500 to well over \$2,000, said Shane Singh, a Sacramento ADA defense attorney.

Specialists can help businesses understand which standards apply, said Kent Hunt, a spokesman for the Department of General Services.

If there are problems, the specialist can help the owner develop an action plan to resolve them. Proactive efforts to get an inspection may provide legal benefits if the business is sued.

“How do you reduce chances of being hit by a lawsuit?” said Kim Stone, president of the Civil Justice Association of California. “Hire a certified access specialist on your own time to find out if you comply or not — and come up with a plan to fix it.”

— Kathy Robertson