

Access Team Annual Report

2025



Table of Contents

Montgomery Parks Mission Statement	03
Access Team Mission and Vision Statement	04
Pillars of Accessibility	05
The Access Team	06
Physical Access	07
Website and Digital Accessibility Highlights	10
ADA Employment Accommodations Impact	11
Program Access	12

MISSION STATEMENT



Protect and interpret our valuable natural and cultural resources, balance demand for recreation with the need for conservation, **offer various enjoyable recreational activities** that encourage healthy lifestyles, and provide clean, **safe, and accessible places.**

ACCESS TEAM



Mission

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Montgomery Parks and Planning Department are committed to upholding the integrity of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by delivering reasonable services, modifications, and physical accessibility as we strive to ensure social equity and inclusion of all citizens.

Vision

Individuals will be afforded respect and dignity while engaging in leisure pursuits to enhance their quality of life in a clean, safe, and accessible setting.

Pillars of Access



Physical Access

Keep up with ADA standards, take reasonable steps to remove barriers, establish projects to create equal opportunities within our parks.



Web & Digital Accessibility

Establish equal access, following Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), and fulfill reasonable accommodations.



Employment Accommodations

Provide reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities through an interactive process.



Program Access

Provide support services to activities within our parks for individuals with disabilities, maintain effective communication, and promote inclusivity throughout all programs.

The Access Team



Jennene Blakely

Program Access
Manager



Rachel Cara

Inclusive Programs and
Events Coordinator



Amanda Espinoza

Inclusion & Adaptive Sports
Specialist



Jessica Homer

Senior Counsel,
Compliance



Wen Huang

ADA Landscape
Architect



Emily Lawrence

Corporate ADA
Coordinator



Carl Morgan

Special Projects and
Policy Manager



Mike Moxley

Assistant Division Chief of
Facilities Management



Samantha Shron

Architectural Supervisor



Rachel Solomon

Workforce Diversity and
Outreach Partner



Ashlyn Thompson

Inclusion and Community
Outreach Specialist



Michelle Worrest

Web Manager



Kristi Williams

Division Chief of Public
Affairs & Community
Partnerships



Shuchi Vera

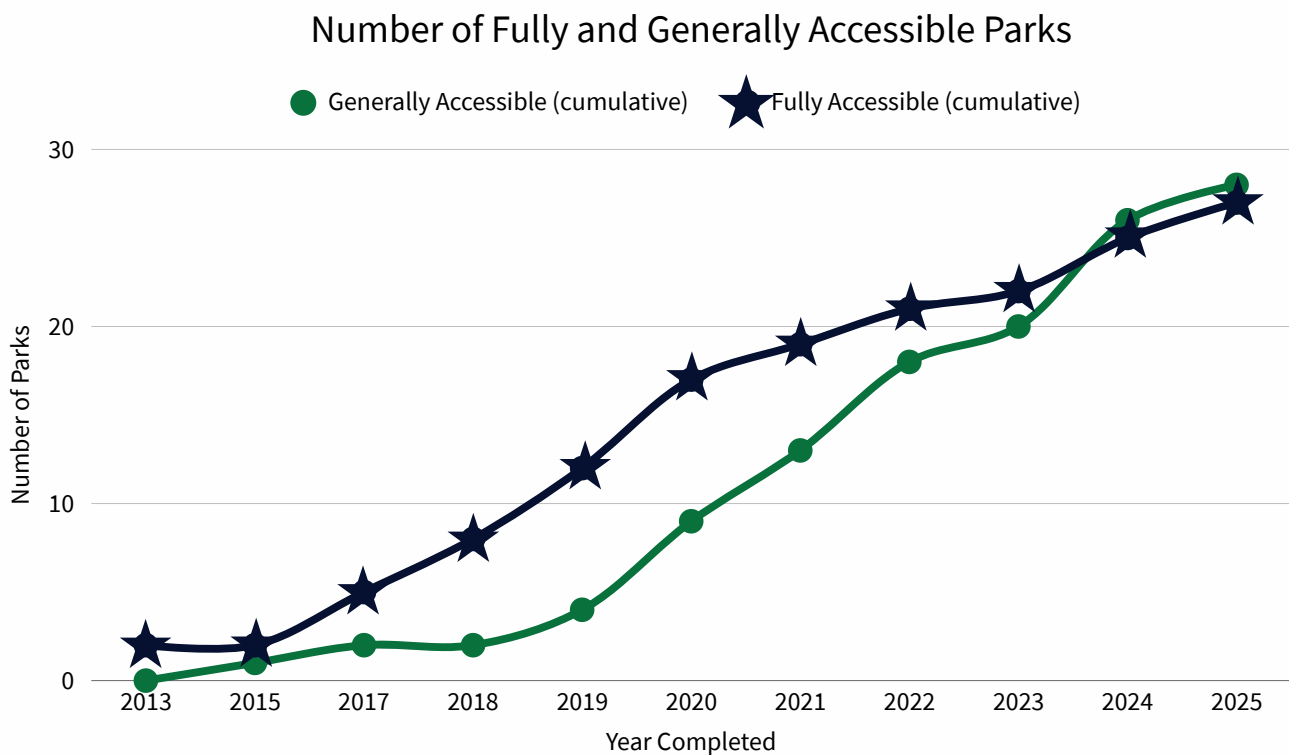
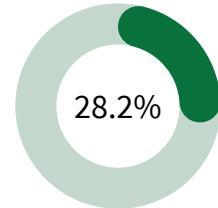
Division Chief of
Management Services



Physical Access

2025 Highlights

28.2% of the 13,600 identified barriers have been removed from parks since 2016.



Parks uses an internal **ADA Dashboard** to document accessible amenities. Highlights include:

- Accessible playgrounds: **91**
- Accessible pavilions: **56**
- Accessible portable bathrooms: **174**
- Accessible permanent restrooms: **14**

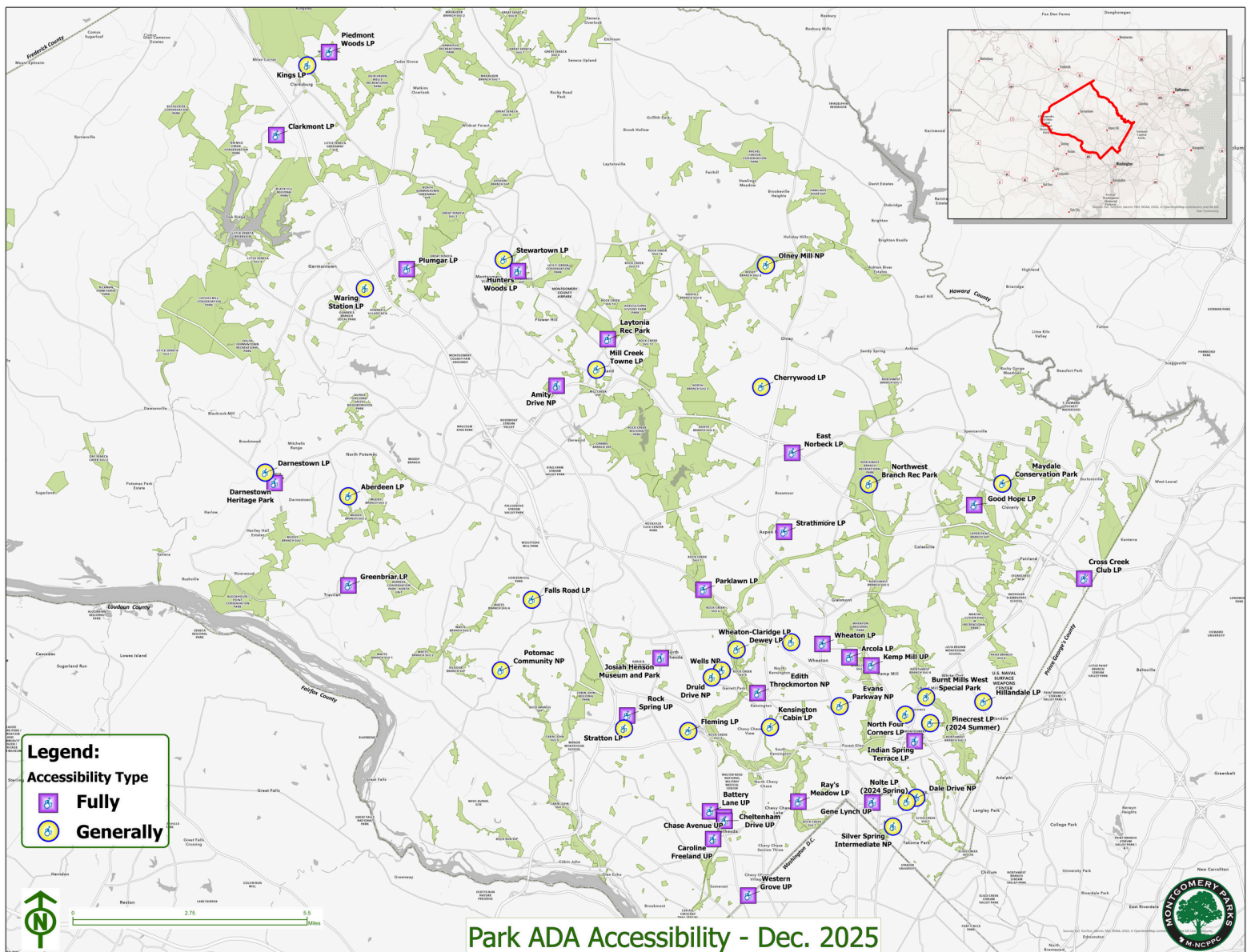


Physical Access

Fully & Generally Accessible Park Map

This map shows the distribution of **54** fully and generally accessible parks across Montgomery Parks, serving communities in both the northern and southern regions of Montgomery County. Montgomery Parks continues to work toward removing barriers and enhancing accessibility across the entire park system.

Visit [Montgomery Parks Physical Access Webpage](#) to filter parks by their accessible amenities or check out the listing of the unique accessible features in our parks.





Physical Access

Improvement Projects

In 2025, Montgomery Parks **completed 12 construction projects** and **continued work on 5 capital projects** to expand accessible and inclusive recreation countywide. Efforts included ADA and facility upgrades, inclusive playground enhancements, new and renovated parks, and improved recreational amenities. Projects currently under construction include Long Branch Garland Neighborhood Park, a new Adventure Playground at South Germantown Recreational Park, South Silver Spring Urban Park, Olney Family Neighborhood Park, and Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park.

Together, these investments reflect Montgomery Parks' ongoing commitment to equitable, accessible park experiences for residents of all abilities.



Physical Access

Completed Construction Projects

Pictures from Black Hill Regional Park, Cabin John Regional Park, Maydale Nature Classroom, Northwest Branch Recreational Park, and Olney Mill Neighborhood Park.



Black Hill Regional Park



Black Hill Regional Park



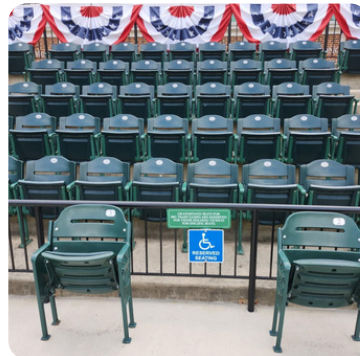
Black Hill Regional Park



Northwest Branch Rec. Park



Olney Mill NP Playground



Cabin John RP - Povich Field



Cabin John RP - Povich Field



Maydale Nature Classroom - Accessible Fire Pit

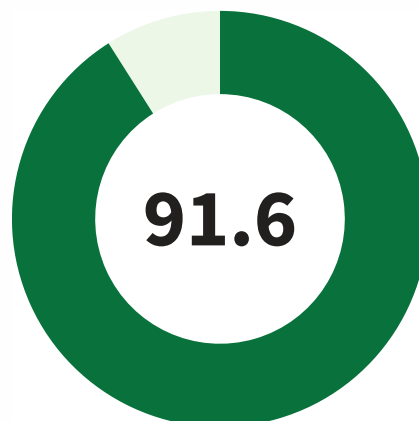


Website and Digital Accessibility

Montgomery Parks is committed to meeting the updated digital accessibility standards issued by the U.S. Department of Justice. In the summer of 2025, Parks launched a custom **Website Accessibility Training** developed in partnership with an external vendor. To date, **106 colleagues** have completed the training, which provides practical guidance for meeting accessibility requirements and is now mandatory for all new web editors. Internal audits and third-party software reviews are underway to support the April 2026 compliance deadline, along with SEO and usability improvements to key tools and forms.

Site Improvement Accessibility Score

Third-party website accessibility audit software: siteimprove.com

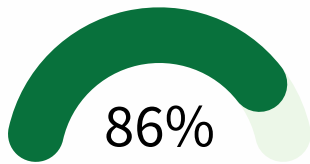




ADA Employment Accommodations

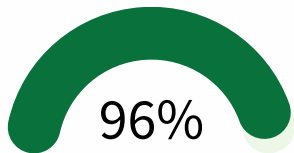
Montgomery Parks is committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse workforce by providing accommodations that enable employees with disabilities to be safe, supported, and successful at work.

- Project SEARCH Internship Program: Parks continues to serve as a host site supporting young adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities in the workforce.
- Mock Interview Events: Parks hosted two sessions to build interns' confidence and interviewing skills.
- ADA Accommodation Processes: **6 completed.**
 - **All employees' reported accommodations were successful.**



Overall participant satisfaction: 86%

"I have deeply appreciated the transparency and advocacy present in this realm."



Overall supervisor satisfaction: 96%

"I am glad we were able to make this work better for (the employee)."





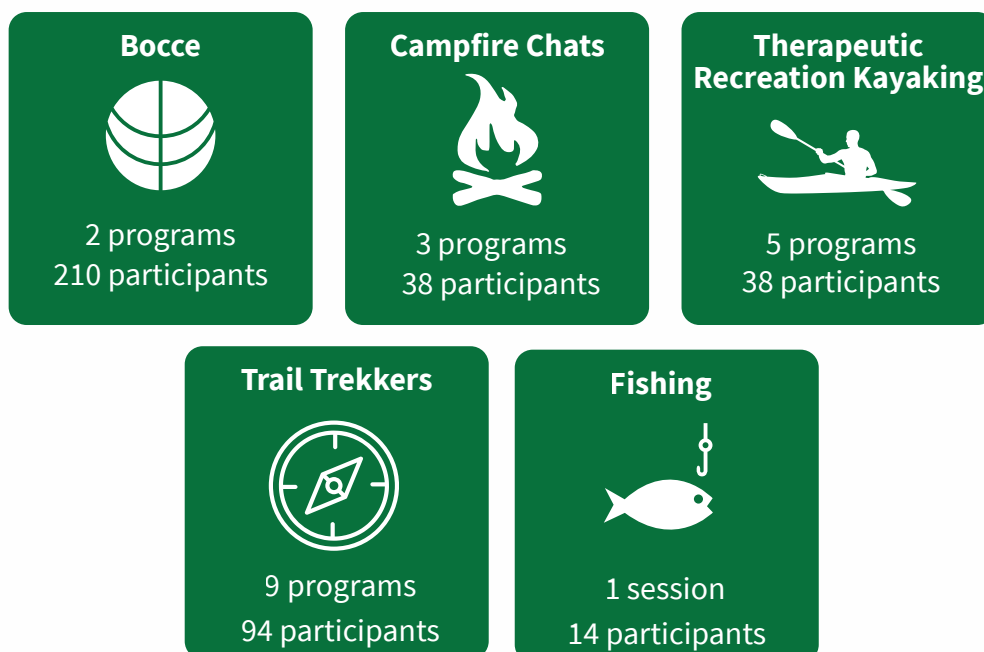
Program Access

Meaningful Day Programs

Program Access' Meaningful Day programs offer adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to stay active and connect with the community while enjoying the great outdoors. By collaborating with Day Service Providers, Program Access provides weekday leisure opportunities that promote socialization, skill-building, and community integration for their participants. In 2025, two new Meaningful Day initiatives were launched: **Campfire Chats**, a social club, and **Therapeutic Recreation Bocce**, developed in partnership with Special Olympics Maryland.

Total Participants by Program

Participant number reflects attendees present





Program Access

Meaningful Day Programs

Pictures from Therapeutic Recreation Bocce, Campfire Chats, Trail Trekkers, and Therapeutic Recreation Fishing with The Arc Montgomery County, a non-profit organization that supports individuals and families with intellectual and developmental disabilities.





Program Access

Montgomery Explorers

A weekly walking program designed for residents 50 and better, Montgomery Explorers encourages participants of all abilities to build a healthy lifestyle. Walkers have the opportunity to increase their physical fitness and create social connections by strolling with their peers throughout Montgomery County.



"I recommend the program to everyone I know as another chance to socialize, to improve physical fitness, and to get out into the fresh air."

- Montgomery Explorers participant

"It is a very well-organized group with very knowledgeable and welcoming people. The versatility of the hikes is nice, geographically and in terms of level of difficulty."

-Montgomery Explorers participant

2025 Highlights



884

Members



47

**Average
walkers per
week**



36

**Organized
walks**



6,429

**Miles
walked**



Program Access

55+ Programs

Program Access offers several programs for the 55 and better community in Montgomery Parks beyond Montgomery Explorers. These programs include kayaking, a book club, socials, and tours.



Participants

247



of Programs

29





Program Access

Adaptive Sports

Program Access offers adaptive sports that expand access to outdoor recreation for individuals with disabilities through inclusive design, adaptive equipment, and supportive instruction. Offerings include adaptive mountain biking, adaptive paddling, therapeutic recreation kayaking, and adaptive fishing, which all provide a range of experiences for all ability levels. Programs are delivered in partnership with organizations such as Kids in Action, Team River Runner, Catalyst Sports, M.O.R.E., Black Hill Discovery Center, and our Natural Surface Trails team, strengthening community collaboration and increasing equitable access to inclusive recreation across Montgomery County.

Adaptive Mountain Biking



8 Programs
44 Participants

Adaptive Paddling



4 Programs
30 Participants

Adaptive Fishing



1 Program
20 Participants

“Great program and staff support. This program has enabled me to go farther into the woods and enjoy the outdoors more than I have been able to do for decades. The equipment is the best available to support the needs of its participants. Staff is so knowledgeable about the equipment and supporting the individual needs of each rider. Thank you for this program!”

-Adaptive Mountain Biking participant



Program Access

Adaptive Sports

Pictures from Adaptive Mountain Biking Clinics in March and November, Adaptive Fishing with Kids in Action in August, and Adaptive Kayaking in July.

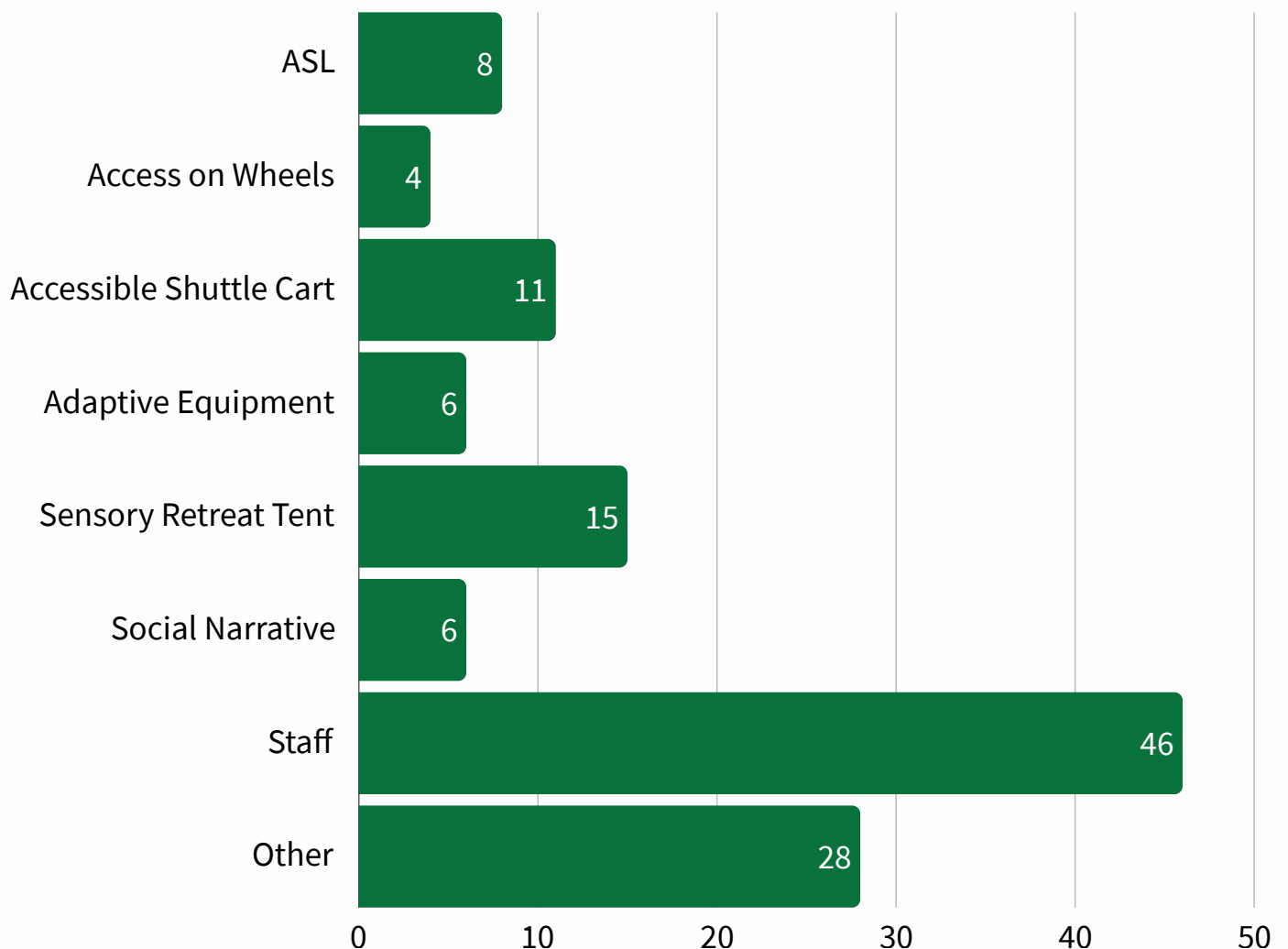




Program Access

Special Event Support

Program Access received **124 service requests** for Montgomery Parks special events and **supported 38 events** in 2025. Services selected include our ADA wheelchair-accessible shuttle cart, sign language interpretation, our sensory retreat tents, our Access on Wheels trailer, and other adaptive equipment like ramps and accessible parking signs.





Program Access

Volunteers

Volunteers are a critical component to the success of our programs. In 2025, **36 volunteers** offered **809 hours of service**, donating a value of **\$28,145*** to our organization.

**Value determined by the estimated national value of volunteer hours at \$34.79 per hour.*

Positions Include:

- Montgomery Explorers Hike Leaders
- Special Event Support
- Adaptive Mountain Biking Support Riders
- Kayaking Volunteers
- Meaningful Day Volunteers (Bocce, Trail Trekkers)





Program Access

Inclusive Events

Program Access hosted 7 inclusive events, including:

- **Shine Brighter Together:** ~300 participants | 16 exhibitors | 6 partners
- **All Anglers Fishing Rodeo:** 28 participants | 3 partnering organizations
- **Storytime in the Park:** 30 participants | Collaboration with Montgomery County Public Library
- **Disability Pride Outside:** 120 participants | 6 partnering organizations
- **All Explorers Walk:** 113 participants | 6 partnering organizations
- **Birdability Week Celebration:** 30 participants | 8 partnering organizations





Program Access

Disability Pride Outside

In celebration of the 35th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Disability Pride Month (July), Program Access planned a full day of inclusive outdoor fun at Black Hill Regional Park. Disability Pride Outside featured adaptive kayaking, mountain biking, hiking, and fishing. Over 100 participants of all ages heard speeches from local leaders, met with community partners who support people with disabilities, and engaged in new recreational activities.





Program Access

Participant Service Requests

Program Access provides reasonable modifications to enable an individual's successful participation in Montgomery Parks programs, classes, and events. Our services are provided at no additional cost to participants and include:

Support staff: Trained staff provided to increase staff-to-participant ratio

Adaptive equipment: Specialized equipment to enhance access to sports and recreation activities.

Assistive listening devices: Equipment to enhance the transmission of spoken audio to participants with hearing loss

Companions: Coordination for support professionals and family members to accompany participants at programs and events.

Large print/braille: Enlarged print materials or translation into Braille

Sign language interpretation: Coordination of ASL for spoken programs

2025 Support Service Requests





Program Access

Training and Professional Development

Program Access offered several professional trainings for county, state, and national organizations.

Training Title	Number of Sessions	Audience	Total Attendance
Accessible Special Events	1	Montgomery Parks	14
Active Aging: A Community-Wide Approach	1	National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA)	97
ADA Refresher	1	Montgomery Parks	27
ADA & Access Training	3	Montgomery Parks	97
Change Not Charity	1	Maryland Recreation & Parks Association (MRPA)	60
Outdoors for All	2	MRPA, Mid-Atlantic ADA	196
Universal Design for Learning	1	MRPA	35
Unlocking Access to Special Events & Programs	1	MRPA	23



Program Access

Thank you and looking ahead

Montgomery Parks' Access Team extends sincere thanks to our internal teams, community partners, advocates, and volunteers whose collaboration makes inclusive recreation possible. Your commitment to accessibility and welcoming spaces strengthens our programs across the county. We are especially grateful to our community members, including participants, families, and caregivers, whose trust and feedback guide our work. Together, we look forward to another year of expanding access, strengthening connections, and creating programs in parks for all.

