

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats – Draft

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool used by organizations to identify their internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats. By systematically evaluating these four key areas, organizations can gain valuable insights into their current position and develop informed strategies for growth and improvement. This approach helps guide decision-making, prioritize initiatives, and address challenges to achieve organizational goals.

Following the data gathering sessions, CPS HR prepared the following draft SWOT analysis to assist CCDA in developing their 5-year target and strategic plan priorities.

Strengths

- **Strong leadership and staff capacity**
 - High confidence in the current Executive Director’s leadership, responsiveness, and ability to stay within scope while advancing the mission.
 - Staff widely viewed as capable, committed, responsive, and the strongest it has been in years.
 - Readiness and clarity going into the strategic planning process.
- **Committed, diverse, and knowledgeable Commission**
 - Commissioners bring deep expertise, lived experience, and strong shared commitment to CCDA’s mission.
 - Recent turnover has introduced new energy, broader perspectives, and improved diversity.
 - Commission culture emphasizes listening, learning, and collaboration.
- **Clear and unique mission**
 - CCDA is widely recognized internally as a *non-enforcement* entity focused on education, compliance support, and bridging the business and disability communities.
 - Viewed as a unique commission nationally, with no true analog elsewhere in the U.S.
 - Strong alignment between staff and commissioners around purpose and intent.
- **Credibility in accessibility and engagement**
 - Commission meetings model best practices in accessibility and inclusive communication.
 - Community outreach and stakeholder engagement are core strengths and central to CCDA’s identity.
 - Programming and speakers at commission meetings are seen as high-quality and valuable.
- **Financial asset to leverage**
 - Potentially the High-Frequency Litigant (HFL)?

Weaknesses

- **Limited visibility and understanding of CCDA**
 - Many business owners, attorneys, and even summit participants are unfamiliar with CCDA or unclear about its role.
 - Commissioners themselves are not always well known in the communities they serve.
 - CCDA's name creates expectations that exceed its actual statutory scope, leading to confusion and frustration.
- **Clarifying CCDA's role in legislative process**
 - Understanding our scope and involvement in shaping disability-related legislation.
 - Perceived role and reach of Commissioners in the legislative process.
 - How CCDA can proactively communicate prior to legislation.
- **Communication and education challenges**
 - Information overload and "information blindness" reduce the effectiveness of existing tools and resources.
 - Materials can be perceived as too technical, complex, or not tailored to specific audiences.
 - Availability of simple, single-topic "quick facts" that can be easily redistributed.
 - Inconsistent reach across regions, with a perception of Sacramento-centric focus.
- **Data and capacity limitations**
 - Concerns about the completeness and accuracy of ADA claims and HFL data.
 - Limited in-house technical expertise to analyze lawsuits and emerging issues in real time.
 - Digital accessibility guidance is underdeveloped and difficult to monitor or certify.
- **Operational inefficiencies**
 - Subcommittee structures can sometimes feel repetitive and time-consuming.
 - Limited onboarding or baseline ADA training for new commissioners.
 - Past turnover has slowed momentum and continuity.

Opportunities

- **Expand education and outreach impact**
 - Develop simpler, audience-specific toolkits (business owners, attorneys, employees, disability community).
 - Create practical, layman's-term guidance, videos, checklists, and multilingual materials.

- Educate attorneys, particularly those without civil rights expertise, to reduce misinformation.
- Increase visibility of commission programming through recordings, webinars, and broader marketing.
- **Strengthening relationships across all levels of government to increase dialogue**
 - Position CCDA as a trusted resource for decision makers on accessibility, ADA compliance, and emerging issues.
 - Be available through appropriate channels before legislation is drafted.
 - Be a sounding board on issues such as digital accessibility and emerging technology.
- **Leverage data and targeted interventions**
 - Use HFL data to identify geographic and sector-based patterns and proactively educate adjacent communities.
 - Track outreach outcomes (e.g., CASp inquiries, toolkit usage) even imperfectly to inform strategy.
 - Focus on high-impact regions (e.g., Los Angeles County) and undeserved communities.
- **Build partnerships and ambassadors**
 - Engage business owners, attorneys, real estate professionals, and chambers of commerce as champions.
 - Partner with trade groups (BOMA, CREW, ICSC) to reach large audiences efficiently.
 - Engage targeted business sectors (Women's, Black, LGBTQIA+ Business Chambers) that face compounded challenges.
- **Major upcoming events**
 - Prepare for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics and other large-scale events as catalysts for accessibility improvements.
 - Use these events to elevate public awareness and proactive compliance statewide.
- **Innovative incentives and models**
 - Explore incentives such as subsidized CASp inspections to encourage participation.
 - Learn from public health models to influence behavior through education rather than enforcement.
 - Expand workforce opportunities by promoting CASp training within the disability community.

Threats

- **Climate of fear and litigation**
 - High-frequency and frivolous lawsuits create fear, disengagement, and mistrust among business owners.
 - Businesses may avoid CCDA out of concern that engagement signals non-compliance.
 - Litigation often targets visible, exterior issues, reinforcing a punitive perception of accessibility.
- **External economic and social pressures**
 - Competing crises (fires, labor shortages, tariffs, housing instability) push accessibility down the priority list for businesses.
 - Business survival concerns can overshadow compliance and education efforts.
- **Policy and scope constraints**

- CCDA cannot limit lawsuits, enforce compliance, or generate revenue, restricting its influence.
- Public frustration arises when government buildings and services remain inaccessible while mandates focus on private businesses.
- Misalignment between public expectations and CCDA's statutory authority risks reputational strain.
- **Resource limitations**
 - Ongoing budget constraints limit scale, frequency, and reach of forums and outreach.
 - Dependence on limited staff capacity makes it difficult to respond rapidly to emerging issues.
- **Perception and representation risks**
 - Perception among some stakeholders that the commission is insular, architect-heavy, or "a place to retire."
 - Risk of disengaging younger professionals or non-architect voices if diversity of perspectives is not actively maintained.