



SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
**Department of Disability  
and Aging Services**

Office on  
Disability and  
Accessibility



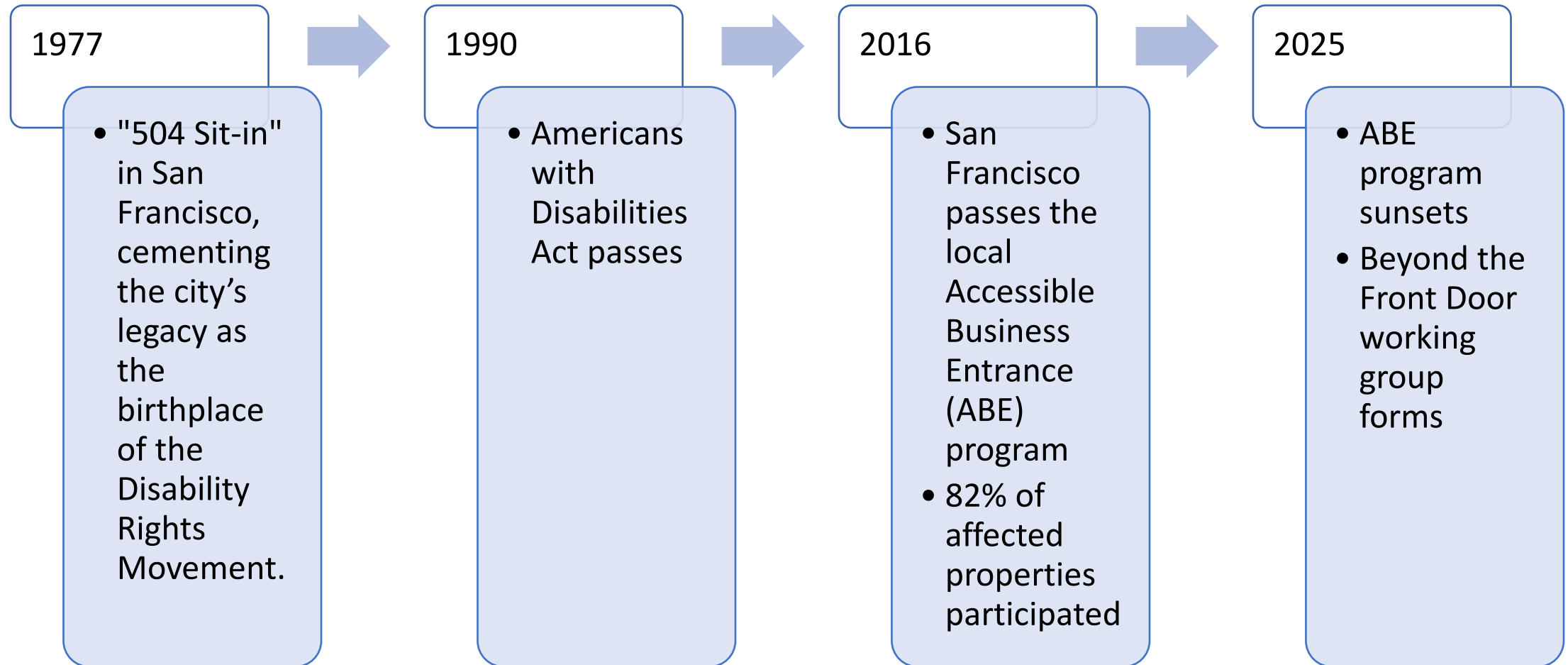
# Beyond the Front Door

Presentation to the California Commission on Disability Access - June 24, 2026

# Today's presentation

1. Brief history of the initiative
2. Goals
3. Progress to date
4. Best practice guide

# Overview & history



# Working group

## Office on Disability & Accessibility

Eli Gelardin

Debby Kaplan

Alicia Contreras

Joe Molica

## Department of Building Inspection

Matthew Greene

Tate Hanna

Patrick Hannan

Stephen Kwok

Kelley Omran

## Office of Small Business

Michelle Reynolds

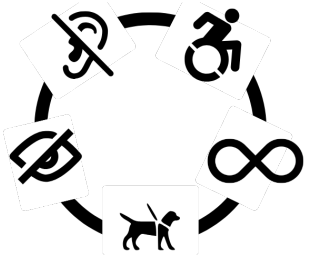
Kerry Birnbach

# Goals

- Promote concept of customers with disabilities as a business opportunity
- Provide businesses with an easy-to-use guide with recommendations and best practices they can readily adopt
- Encourage mutually beneficial relationships between small businesses and customers with disabilities

# Tactics for year 1

- ✓ Best Practice Guide for disability inclusion
- ✓ Short videos that explain and illustrate disability inclusion
- Social media campaigns inviting people with disabilities to submit their own short
- ✓ Information in the Office of Small Business newsletter
- ✓ Discuss campaigns and strategies on disability inclusion with the Mayor's Disability Council and Small Business Commission.



# Serving customers with disabilities: A guide for small business owners

A guide of practical ideas for businesses to create a welcoming place for customers with disabilities. They focus on low cost or no cost actions.

- Created by the Office on Disability & Accessibility in consultation with community groups and people with disabilities
- It will be available as a print-friendly PDF, accessible webpage on SF.gov, and social media shorts

[SF.gov/business-access-guide](https://sf.gov/business-access-guide)

# Excerpts:

## General guidance

- Assume competence
- Ask how the person prefers to communicate
- Speak to the person, not a companion
- Ask before touching mobility devices or belongings

# Excerpts:

## Blind or low vision



- Ask “Would you like assistance?” and let the person take your arm if they choose
- Read menus, labels, or printed information aloud when asked

# Excerpts:

## Deaf or hard-of-hearing



- Start by asking, “What’s the best way for us to communicate with you?” and honor their choice—whether it’s sign language, email, captioning, speech-to-text, texting, writing on a paper, or another method
- When speaking, face the person and remove a mask when possible.

# Excerpts: Neurodiverse

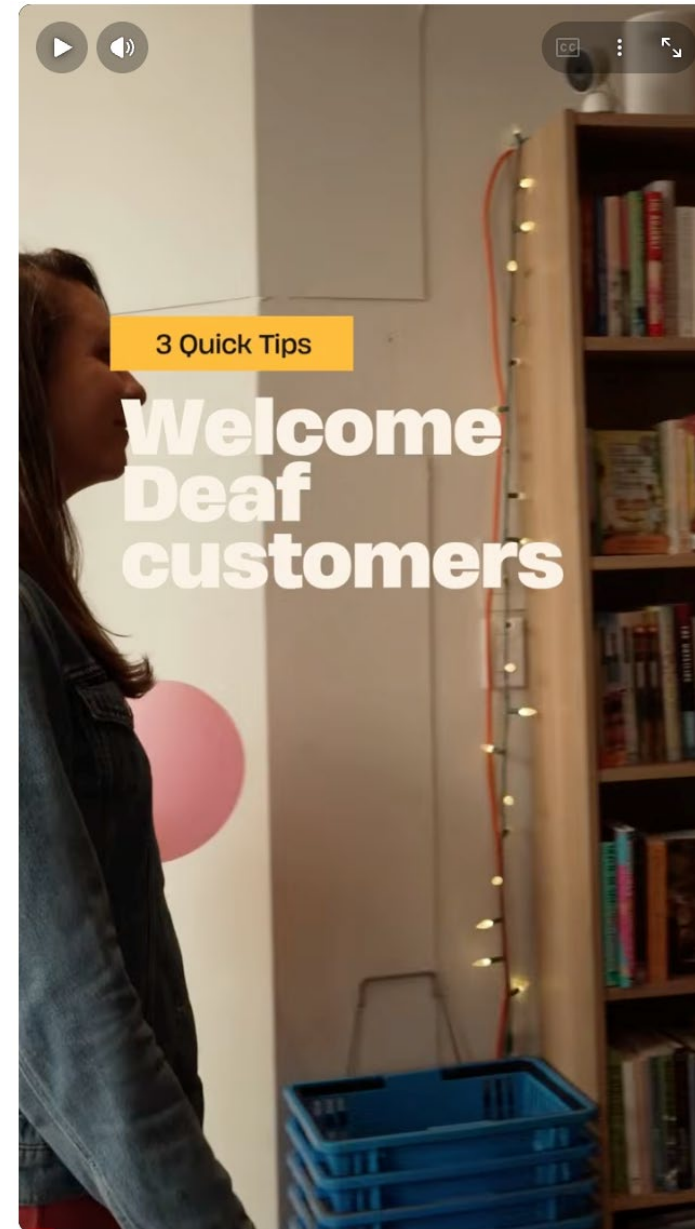


- Post clear signage with simple instructions
- Offer step-by-step explanations of services
- Share what to expect (e.g., “Your appointment will take 45 minutes. We’ll begin with...”)
- **Giving choice empowers clients and reduces stress.**

**Video #1:**  
Paul Bendix at Canyon  
Market



## Video #2: Diedre Tanenberg at Best Bookstore





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# Thank you