



ODO Accomplishments (as of January 2016)

Market Studies

In 2002, Open Doors Organization sponsored the first-ever nationwide study on the disability travel market. It revealed not only at how many adults with disabilities are traveling and how much they spend, but also how many still face barriers—physical and attitudinal—in air travel, hotels and restaurants. Both this and a follow-up study in 2005 were conducted by Harris Interactive. A third study in 2015 was conducted online by Mandala Research LLC using panels from Harris Interactive. Media coverage of this ground breaking research helped establish ODO’s reputation as a dynamic non-profit that understands the needs of both the travel industry and the disability community. To date the ODO Market Studies provide the only reliable data on this large and growing market which now contributes \$17.3 billion in spending annually.

Conferences and Symposia

- **Universal Access in Airports (UAIA) Conference.** Hosted biennially by ODO since 2006, this unique event brings together all interested parties from aviation and the disability community to share best practices and learn about new technological solutions and inclusive design.
- **Airline Symposium.** Hosted free of charge annually by ODO from 2005-2010, this closed door session is now held bi-annually in conjunction with UAIA. It enables airlines to discuss disability-related problems, share best practices and keep up-to-date on regulatory issues.
- **Airline Service Company Symposium.** Hosted free of charge annually by ODO from 2006-2009, this closed door session is now held on an “as-needed” basis. It enables airline service companies to discuss disability-related problems, share best practices and keep up-to-date on regulatory issues.

Easy Access Guides

ODO's award-winning series of accessibility guides makes travel planning as easy for people with functional limitations as for the non-disabled population. There are currently two guides, *Easy Access Chicago* and *Easy Access Springfield*. The free guides are available both online and in an abridged print version with information presented by type of disability—hearing, vision and mobility. All point-of-interest data is gathered by onsite audits conducted by ODO-trained staff or consultants. The primary sponsor for the *Easy Access* series is the IL Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

In 2008 Open Doors Organization received the Organization of the Year Award for its *Easy Access Chicago* guide from the Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities, State of Illinois.

Open Taxis

Open Taxis, the new centralized dispatch for all Chicago wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs), was launched by ODO on August 1, 2013. By August 21st, Open Taxis had already dispatched over 1,000 WAVs. The 24/7 service is run from ODO's office near O'Hare, a convenient location for taxi drivers heading to or from the airport. Open Taxis currently dispatches over 2000 rides per month. All drivers in the program also receive disability awareness training from ODO. In 2015 the City of Chicago renewed the contract for Open Taxis in recognition of the stellar service provided by ODO to the city's residents and visitors with disabilities.

Aviation Training

• Complaint Resolution Official (CRO) Training

Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) regulations require airlines, domestic and foreign, to train and make available disability experts known as CROs. This 2-day training includes an in-depth analysis of ACAA regulations and a disability awareness module. ODO offers both group and individual trainings in the US and overseas. Since April 2009 we have trained the following entities:

Airlines

- Aer Lingus
- Aeroflot
- AeroSvit Airlines
- Air Canada
- Alitalia Airlines
- Asiana
- Avianca Airlines
- British Airways
- China Eastern Airlines
- Condor
- Egypt Air
- El Al Airlines
- Emirates Airlines
- Eurofly
- Finnair
- Iberia Airlines

- Interjet
- Jet Blue Airlines
- Kuwait Airways
- LAN Airlines
- LOT Polish Airlines
- Meridiana Fly
- Mexicana
- Pakistan Int'l Airlines
- Philippines Air Lines
- Royal Air Maroc
- Santa Barbara Airlines
- South African Airways
- TACA Airlines
- TAM Airlines
- TAP Air Portugal
- Transaero
- Turkish Airlines
- Ukraine Int'l Airlines
- Uzbekistan Airlines
- Volaris
- WestJet
- XL Airways France

Airline Service Companies: Gateway Group One, Worldwide Flight Services, G2 Secure Staff, Allstate, JCM Business Solutions, Swissport

Government Agencies: Port Authority of NY and NJ, Dept. of Transportation

Airline Consortium: Terminal Four Airline Consortium (TFAC – JFK)

• Refresh CRO Training

This ODO online program assists airlines to meet annual refresher training requirements for its Complaint Resolution Officials and is available both as classroom training and distance learning. The webinar, offered since 2010 and updated each year, is now available through our [ODO Academy](#), launched in 2015.

• Aviation Access Certification Training

In early 2013 ODO launched a new and unique Aviation Access Certification Program designed to raise the quality of and standardize service by airline wheelchair service employees nationwide. The training helps employees do a better, safer job and realize how valuable their services are, thereby enhancing the quality and experience for both their customers and themselves. ODO's Certified Access Provider patches, awarded to staff members who successfully complete the course, are already in view at a dozen major airports nationwide. Gateway Group One, the first corporation to sign on, was joined by Eulen America in 2014.

• Staff Disability Awareness Training

ODO provides disability awareness training to both airlines and airline service companies, helping them meet training requirements under the Air Carrier Access Act, improve customer service and reduce complaints. Clients to date include: Northwest Airlines, AirServ and Gateway Group One as well as numerous US airlines. As a member of the United Airlines Access Advisory Board, ODO staff also participate in numerous disability awareness trainings annually for airline and airline service company employees at airports at domestic and foreign airports.

- **TSA Passenger Support Specialist Training**

Open Doors Organization has played a key role in designing and delivering training to TSA's new disability experts known as Passenger Support Specialists. To date, over 4,500 PSS's have been trained. In recognition of ODO's contribution to the program, the TSA Community Partner Award was presented to Executive Director Eric Lipp at the 11th Annual TSA Coalition Conference in September 2013.

- **Wheelchair Stowage Workshops**

Since 2010 ODO has provided workshops at major airports for ramp crew to help them reduce damage to wheelchairs and injuries to employees. The workshops are offered free of charge to air carriers through a partnership with Global Repair Group (GRB). Airlines who have participated to date include Virgin Atlantic, US Airways, SkyWest, Continental Airlines, American Airlines and United Airlines. ODO and GRB also provided stowage training to all air carriers at Heathrow Airport prior to the 2012 Summer Olympics and Paralympics. In 2016 ODO and GRB will again train ramp crew in advance of the Olympics and Paralympics at airports in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, Brazil.

- **Stowage for Ground Operations – Train the Trainers Live Webinars**

In June 2011, ODO in partnership with Global Repair Group introduced a live webinar series aimed at reducing damage to wheelchairs and injuries to ramp crew. The webinars, available on demand, are designed for ground ops trainers, supervisors and customer service representatives and cover all types of mobility devices. In 2016 these webinars will be again be available through the new [ODO Academy](#).

- **Airport Disability Awareness Webinar – ACI**

Open Doors Organization, in partnership with Airports Council International, in 2011 created a webinar for airport managers, planners and employees. The Disability Awareness Module is designed to meet the training needs of frontline staff not just in the US, Canada and Europe but also worldwide.

- **Airport Customer Service Classroom Training – ACI**

To enhance services and facilities for passengers with disabilities, ODO and Airports Council International (ACI) in 2016 will offer a new series of workshops in the US for aviation managers and access coordinators. The first introductory-level workshop, *Passengers with Reduced Mobility*, is scheduled for May 16-18, 2016, in San Francisco. A second intermediate-level course, focusing on the roles and responsibilities of airport access coordinators, will launch in the third quarter of 2016. Additional workshops are planned for 2017. [Press release](#)

- **Airport Disability Awareness Classroom Training – PHL**

ODO has over the years delivered disability awareness seminars at various airports in the US. In 2015 and 2016 the non-profit was contracted by Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) to provide a series of classroom trainings for airport employees and volunteers. The new training for 2016 includes a walking tour of airport concourses to familiarize staff with the many features designed to accommodate the needs of travelers with disabilities and older adults.

Ground Transportation Training

- **Amtrak ADA Customer Service Training**

In 2011, ODO developed a full-day training program for Amtrak which was successfully delivered to approximately 8,000 frontline employees in 17 cities nationwide as part of their year-long block training. Only the third outside agency to be hired to conduct block training, ODO had to create PowerPoint presentations, exercises and handouts, hire and train over 30 trainers, most of whom have disabilities themselves, and administer this complex program. The course included a disability awareness module and sections on the Americans with Disabilities Act and Amtrak policies and procedures with regard to customers with disabilities. This is ODO's largest program to date.

- **ADA Motorcoach Training**

At the request of the United Motorcoach Association, ODO in January 2012 launched a day-long training program for Over-The-Road-Bus operators aimed at helping them comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and improve customer service and marketing to people with disabilities and seniors. The training is delivered by two trainers: an ODO staff member and a consultant from the motorcoach industry. Both individual and group trainings are available, with most group events to date hosted by state bus associations. By December 2013, ODO had conducted training events in the following states: AR, AL, CA, FL, GA, IL, MD, NY, PA, TN, VA, WA and WI. In 2016 ODO will begin to offer this training as a series of webinars at its [ODO Academy](#).

- **Uber**

Open Doors Organization began working with Uber in 2014 to improve its rideshare service for people with disabilities. Under our guidance they have created two programs, UberAssist and UberAccess. UberAssist uses standard vehicles and requires drivers who volunteer for the program to receive disability awareness training and learn out to handle and stow mobility devices including manual wheelchairs. UberAssist uses wheelchair accessible vehicles and requires drivers to receive training as well on wheelchair securement. ODO developed the training courses and has conducted classroom trainings in a number of cities nationwide with many more to come. In addition ODO wrote and filmed a training video for Uber in Washington, DC, in 2014 and will create a second training video for use nationwide in 2016.

Hospitality Training

One of ODO's core services is disability awareness and customer service training for restaurants and hotels. We work with individual properties as well as small and large chains. Among our early clients were Fuddrucker's and Creative Hotels.

Cultural Institution Training

- **Chicago Cultural Access Consortium**

Open Doors Organization is a founding member of the Chicago Cultural Access Consortium (CCAC). The mission of this volunteer-run group is to empower Chicago's cultural spaces to be more accessible to visitors with disabilities. In January 2014, CCAC kicked off a series of free monthly programs that are also posted on You Tube to reach a wider audience. The second event entitled "Disability Awareness Training for Front-Line Staff" features ODO's Eric Lipp and Risa Rifkind.

- **Inclusive Arts & Culture Program**

In 2009-2010 under a grant from Chicago Community Trust, Open Doors Organization offered a series of free workshops aimed at increasing access to the arts in its home city of Chicago. Participating cultural organizations, primarily museums and theatres, learned how to make their facilities, services and outreach more accessible and welcoming to the disability community.

- **Chicago Children's Museum**

Open Doors Organization, which has a long-term relationship with Chicago Children's Museum, provides disability awareness training to museum staff and also consults on accessibility, helping the museum develop programs that are inclusive including their popular "Play for All" program.

Accessibility Consulting

Airports

ODO works with airport administrators to help them improve service and facilities for customers with disabilities. Our services include presentations on universal design and accessibility, advisory meetings, accessibility audits, and written reports with recommendations for short, medium and long-term improvements to terminal facilities. Airports with whom ODO has worked include:

- Kuala Lumpur Airport
- Casablanca Airport

- Gatwick Airport
- Heathrow Airport
- Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport
- Chicago Airport Authority—O'Hare and Midway Airports
- Port Authority of NY and NJ—JFK, LaGuardia and Newark Airports
- Philadelphia International Airport

Airlines

ODO advises airline executives on how to better serve its passengers with disabilities and works on specific issues such as accessible seating and compliance with the Air Carrier Access Act. Clients include Royal Air Maroc and Virgin Atlantic as well as several US carriers.

Cruise Ships

ODO has worked with several cruise lines, helping them improve onboard accessibility and customer service. In 2010 our expert staff and consultants carried out audits for Celebrity Cruises and recommended short-term access improvements to three classes of ships. In 2009 ODO conducted audits for Norwegian Cruise Lines (NCL). ODO has also created training videos for Royal Caribbean International and NCL.

Hotels

ODO works with both chains and individual hotels, conducting accessibility audits and assisting lodging facilities to comply with the ADA and improve service for their guests with disabilities.

Recreational Facilities

Open Doors Organization assisted in the design of Springfield's Southwind Park, the city's newest and most inclusive public park and attraction. ODO has also consulted with the Chicago Public Parks Department and the City of Galveston, Texas, on the accessibility of public beaches.

Video Production

ODO has created staff training videos, from script through final edit, or assisted in their development for the following clients in the aviation, cruise and ground transportation industries

- Norwegian Cruise Line
- Royal Caribbean International
- Virgin Atlantic
- Jet Blue
- Prospect
- Gateway Group One
- Uber

Community and Consumer Programs

- **ODO/AIR Autism Airport Program**

Open Doors Organization in 2014 teamed up with Autism Inclusion Resources (AIR) to administer their excellent Autism Airport Program. The kick off event, hosted by United Airlines, took place at Newark International Airport on April 13, 2014. AIR, the Philadelphia non-profit headed by Dr. Wendy Ross, is dedicated to helping families affected by autism participate fully in their communities and travel like everyone else. The AIR Airport Program is unique in that it pairs a clinician with each family to help them develop specific coping strategies for their child. The program also offers autism awareness training to airline and airport staff. Except for actually taking off, the families have the full airport experience: checking in with luggage, clearing security, traveling to the gate, boarding the plane, having a snack on board and then reclaiming their luggage. United Airlines hosted multiple AIR events in 2014.

- **ODO Girl Scouts Disability Awareness Program**

This unique program—a first for the Girl Scouts--was developed and hosted by Open Doors Organization from 2003-2008, with more than 350 girls earning the “More Alike Than Different” badge. Participants attend a series of workshops that focus on the experience of disability and include educational activities and performances by artists with disabilities. Although ODO is no longer involved in the program, it still is being offered in Chicago and remains the only disability-related badge offered by the Girl Scouts.

- **ODO Girl Scouts Disability Awareness Fair**

In 2003-4, Open Doors Organization was awarded the University of Illinois Chancellor’s Commitment to Diversity Award for this innovative Fair, the final event in ODO’s year-long Girl Scouts Disability Awareness Program.

- **ODO Computer to Work Program**

The ODO Computer to Work Program, which ran from 2003-2006, provided adults with disabilities free refurbished computers to help them with school, job searches and home-based businesses. In recognition of this program, Open Doors Organization was honored by the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago with an Annual Corporate Award on December 4, 2003.

- **ODO Fellowship and Intern Programs**

Open Doors Organization established a fellowship and intern program with the University of Illinois-Chicago whereby graduate students from the University’s Department of Disability and Human Development received a stipend in return for their work at ODO. Open Doors Organization has also welcomed interns from Roosevelt University, Archiworks and other educational institutions in the Chicago area.

- **Travel Training Programs**

Educating consumers with disabilities has always been an important part of the Open Doors Organization mission. ODO provides workshops on traveling with a disability at consumer events such as the Abilities Expo and meetings organized by disability associations such as the Multiple Sclerosis Society. In partnership with the Life Center at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, Open Doors Organization also developed a course for first-time air travelers. ODO has recently partnered with Wounded Warriors to create and teach travel training programs for veterans who are newly disabled, working in conjunction with airports around the U.S.

Federally Funded Projects

Open Doors Organization worked as a subcontractor on two important, federally-funded projects from 2014 to 2016, each with a technological focus.

- **ACRP 07-13 Enhancing Airport Wayfinding for the Elderly Persons with Disabilities**

This project funded by the Airports Cooperative Research Program (ACRP) was led by the architectural firm Gresham Smith and Partners. Focus groups for the project were conducted during ODO's 2014 Universal Access in Airports event 2014. ODO's other contributions included creation of detailed wayfinding audits for airport self-assessment and work on a prototype wayfinding app with IBM Research at their headquarters in Austin, Texas. The resulting guide for airports will be completed in 2016.

- **ATTRI Stakeholder Engagement and User Needs**

Funded by Assistive Transportation Technologies Research Initiative, this project headed by Battelle explored the needs of three user groups: persons with disabilities, older adults and veterans/wounded warriors. ODO assisted in the extensive literature review and delivery in 2015 of three interactive webinars and a day-long workshop in Washington, DC. The final report, to be completed in 2016, will help determine the focus of future ATTRI projects including the specific technologies to be targeted.

Other Noteworthy Projects

- **Accessible Airline Websites**

Open Doors Organization in 2015 began a program to test the accessibility and functionality of airline websites in advance of new requirements under the Air Carrier Access Act that became effective in December. The testing program was developed in response to demand primarily from foreign air carriers and makes use of ODO's team of knowledgeable consultants around the US.

- **Accessible Airport Kiosks**

In 2015 and 2016, Open Doors Organization is serving as a consultant to Airlines For America (A4A) on design of airport kiosks and how best to comply with new accessibility requirements under the Air Carrier Access Act. ODO representatives Eric Lipp, Laurel Van Horn, Pat Pound and Constantine Zografopoulos provided expert testimony and fielded numerous questions at a multi-day meeting on kiosks organized by A4A and the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Attending the May 2015 event were over 30 representatives from US and foreign airlines, US airports, kiosk manufacturers and software providers.

- **World Health Networks Health Stations**

In 2013-14, ODO assisted World Health Networks (WHN) to redesign their health stations. The newly accessible FlyHealthy Hub debuted at the Passenger Terminal Expo in Barcelona in March 2014. The kiosks measure blood pressure, heart rate, weight, body fat percentage and body mass index (BMI) and send the reading to the passenger's cell phone, all free of charge.

- **White House GeoAccess Challenge**

In 2010-11, Open Doors Organization participated in a 90-day challenge hosted by the White House, Federal Communications Commission and Department of Commerce aimed at exploring ways in which technology can increase accessibility. The resulting report, entitled "Data-Enabled Travel: How Geo-Data Can Support Inclusive Transportation, Tourism, and Navigation through Communities," utilized data from ODO's *Easy Access Chicago* guide in its "Proof of Concept." GeoAccess Team members included IBM, AOL, AT&T, Yahoo! Accessibility Group, Carnegie Mellon, Inclusive Technologies and Sendero Group, as well as government agencies such as DOT's Accessible Transportation Technologies Research Initiative.

- **Staxi Wheelchair and Boarding Chair Design**

ODO worked as a consultant on the redesign of the Staxi wheelchair, used in both airports and hospitals nationwide, and the Staxi boarding chair, used to safely move individuals who are non-ambulatory to and from their seats on aircraft.

- **Accessible Taxi Design—MV-1**

ODO worked as a consultant to [Vehicle Production Group LLC](#) on the prototype of their wheelchair accessible MV-1, then known as Standard Taxi. The MV-1 has now been approved for use in major taxi and paratransit fleets, including New York City's, and is being produced in Indiana.

- **Bodies of Work—Chicago Festival of Disability Arts and Culture**

Open Doors Organization was a sponsor and organizer of the First Chicago Festival of Disability Arts and Culture, held in April 2006. With more than 60 programs and 23 venues, the 10-day event showcased both the cutting-edge and historical movements in disability arts, highlighting the work of over 100 professional artists from Chicago, the U.S., Japan, U.K., South Korea, Mexico, France, and Australia.

Advisory Board Memberships

ODO has had the pleasure to serve the transportation industry by participating on the following company advisory boards:

- Northwest Airlines
- Continental Airlines
- United Airlines
- Virgin America
- Royal Caribbean International
- Amtrak

ODO is also a member of the Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) Disability Coalition.

Keynote and Educational Speeches

Executive Director Eric Lipp, Director of Programs Laurel Van Horn and other ODO associates are regularly invited to speak or appear on panels at industry meetings and educational forums. Recent speaking engagements include:

- Airports Council International-North America Annual Conference, Los Angeles, October 2015
- ACI Latin America-Caribbean/World Annual General Assembly, Panama City, Panama, September 2015
- Passenger Terminal Expo, Paris, France, 2015
- Passenger Terminal Expo, Barcelona, Spain, 2013
- American Association of Airport Executives, New Orleans, October 2013
- Travelers Aid International Annual Conference, New Orleans, 2013
- FAA 3rd Annual National Civil Rights Training Conference for Airports/ADA-504 Training: Best Practices, 2012, 2013 and 2015
- Assistive Technology Industry Association/GIS and Wayfinding, 2012
- Annual International Technology & Persons with Disabilities Conference (CSUN), San Diego, 2012 and 2011
- CEO Forum, Airports Council International-North America, 2012

- Multicultural Marketing Resources Course, New York University, 2011 and 2007
- Airports Council International, Montreal, Canada, 2010
- 9th Annual Making A Difference Discovery Day, Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities, Atlanta, 2010
- South Carolina Motorcoach Association Annual Conference, Atlanta, 2010
- US Business Leadership Network (USBLN) Annual Conference, Chicago, 2010
- International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons (Transed), Montreal, Canada, 2010

Publications

ODO staff members have contributed numerous articles over the years to online and print media, focusing on helpful travel tips, accessible destinations and recent changes in disability rights legislation. Consumer disability publications that have frequently carried ODO articles include Venture, Able News, Spinal Network and Disaboom. Beginning in 2015 Eric Lipp also has a monthly blog on Huffington Post.

ODO Research Papers of note include:

- “ODO Marketing Forecast” by Eric Lipp and Laurel Van Horn, in *TTRA Marketing Outlook Forum*, 2013 and 2015.
- “The United States: Travellers with Disabilities,” by Laurel Van Horn, in *Best Practice in Accessible Tourism* (Channel View Publications, 2012)
- “Guide to Service Animal Relief Areas,” by Pat Pound and Andy Kennedy (Open Doors Organization, 2011)
- “ODO Marketing Forecast 2011,” by Eric Lipp and Laurel Van Horn, in *USTA Marketing Outlook Forum 2011*
- “Accessible Travel and Transportation in the United States,” by Laurel Van Horn, in *Conference Proceedings* (Transed, 2007)
- “Toward a Global History of Inclusive Travel,” by Laurel Van Horn and Jose Isola, in *Review of Disability Studies*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, 2006

Awards

- Transportation Safety Administration, *TSA Community Partner Award*, 2013
- State of Illinois, Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities, *Organization of the Year Award for Easy Access Chicago*, 2008
- University of Illinois-Chicago 2004 *Commitment to Diversity Award*
- Society for Travel & Hospitality (SATH) 2003 Access to Freedom Award