

EVALUATING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF AMERICAN JOB CENTERS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

**National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics
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AMERICAN JOB CENTERS

- Established by Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998
- Provides workforce development services to job seekers and employers under one roof
- Provides core, intensive and training services
- Services provided through a network of locally managed comprehensive and affiliate Centers
- Co-location of related programs



- AJCs are required to be universally accessible to all job seekers, including PWD
- No comprehensive and methodologically rigorous studies examining accessibility levels of AJCs

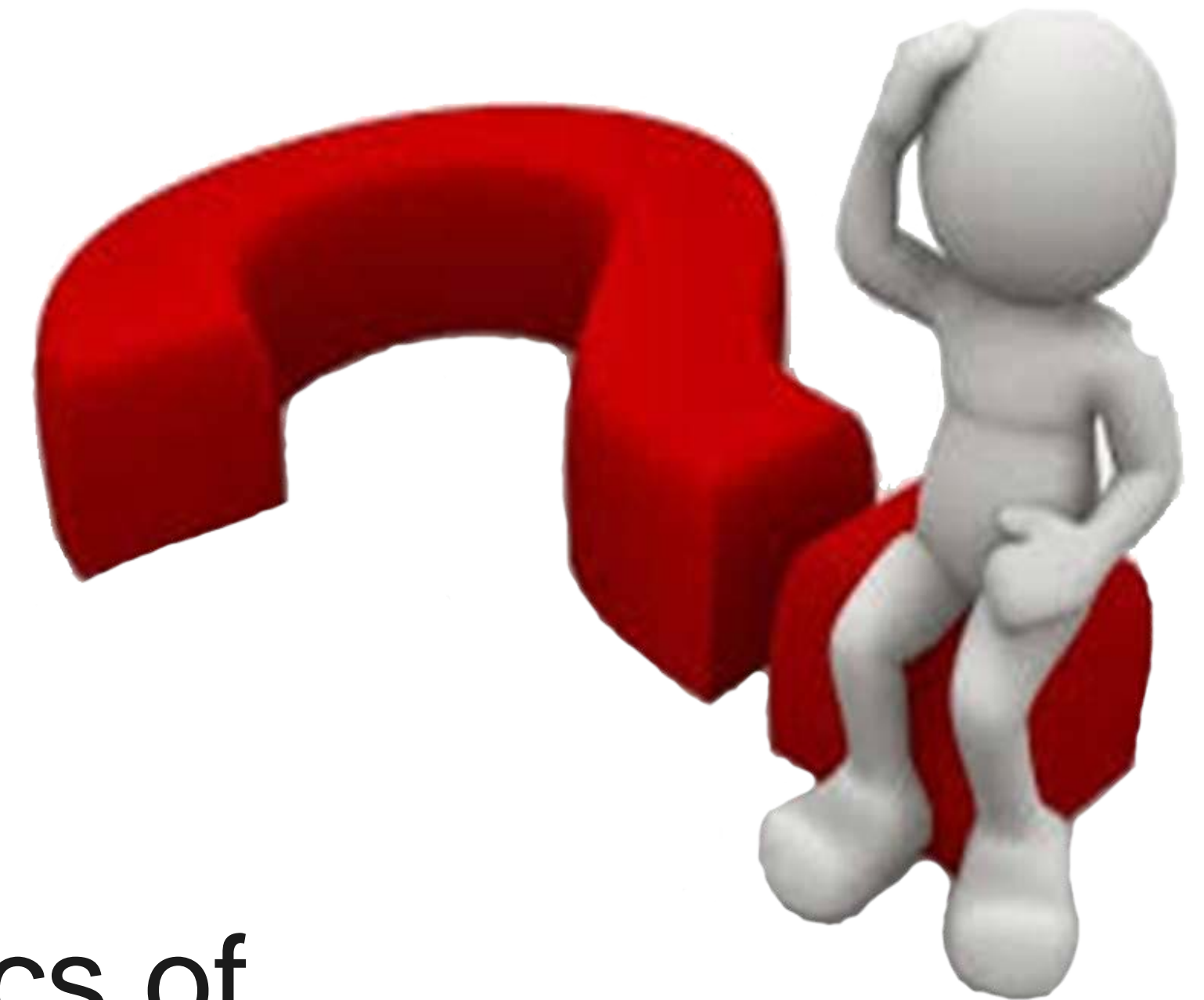


The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act



The Americans with Disabilities Act

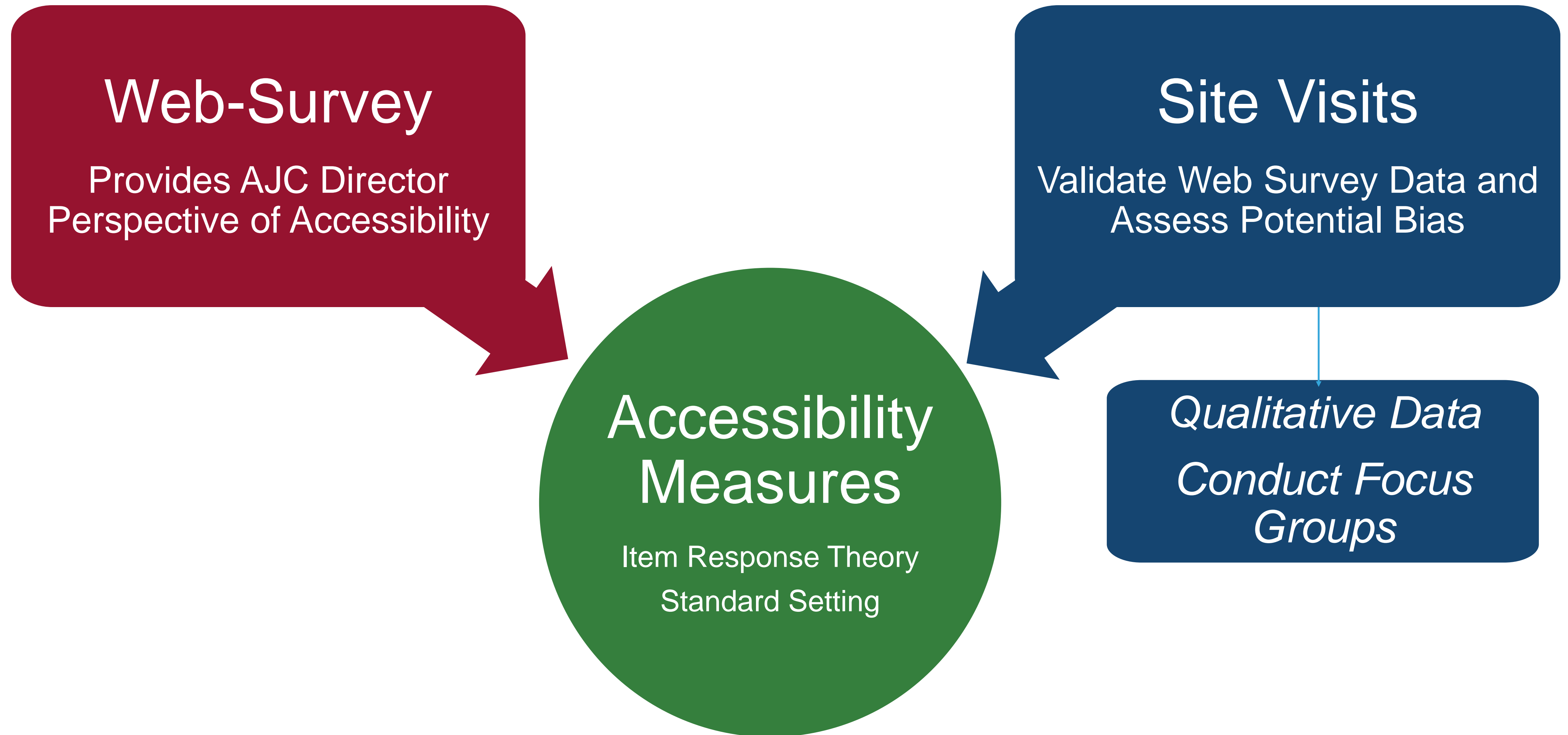
- ▶ Are AJCs accessible to people with disabilities?
- ▶ How does accessibility vary across three domains:
 - Physical
 - Communication
 - Programmatic
- ▶ How does accessibility vary by characteristics of the AJC (e.g., AJC type or urbanicity?)



PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY – The extent to which facilities are designed, constructed, or altered so that they are accessible and usable by people with disabilities.

COMMUNICATIONS ACCESSIBILITY – The extent to which Center staff and partner agencies are able to communicate with people with disabilities as effectively as with others.

PROGRAMMATIC ACCESSIBILITY – The extent to which people with disabilities have access to the full range of services available to all AJC customers regardless of disability.





DATA COLLECTION

SURVEY AND SITE VISITS



- Web survey administered between December 4, 2014 and March 3, 2015
- 2,453 AJCs surveyed
 - 1,679 Comprehensive AJCs
 - 774 Affiliate AJCs
- 55% (1,352) of AJCs responded to survey

SITE VISITS

- Visited a stratified, random sample of 100 AJCs
- Interviews conducted with AJC staff corresponding to questions from web-based survey
- Assessments of physical accessibility conducted by Architectural Consultants Associates
- Focus Groups with AJC customers with disabilities in nine AJCs



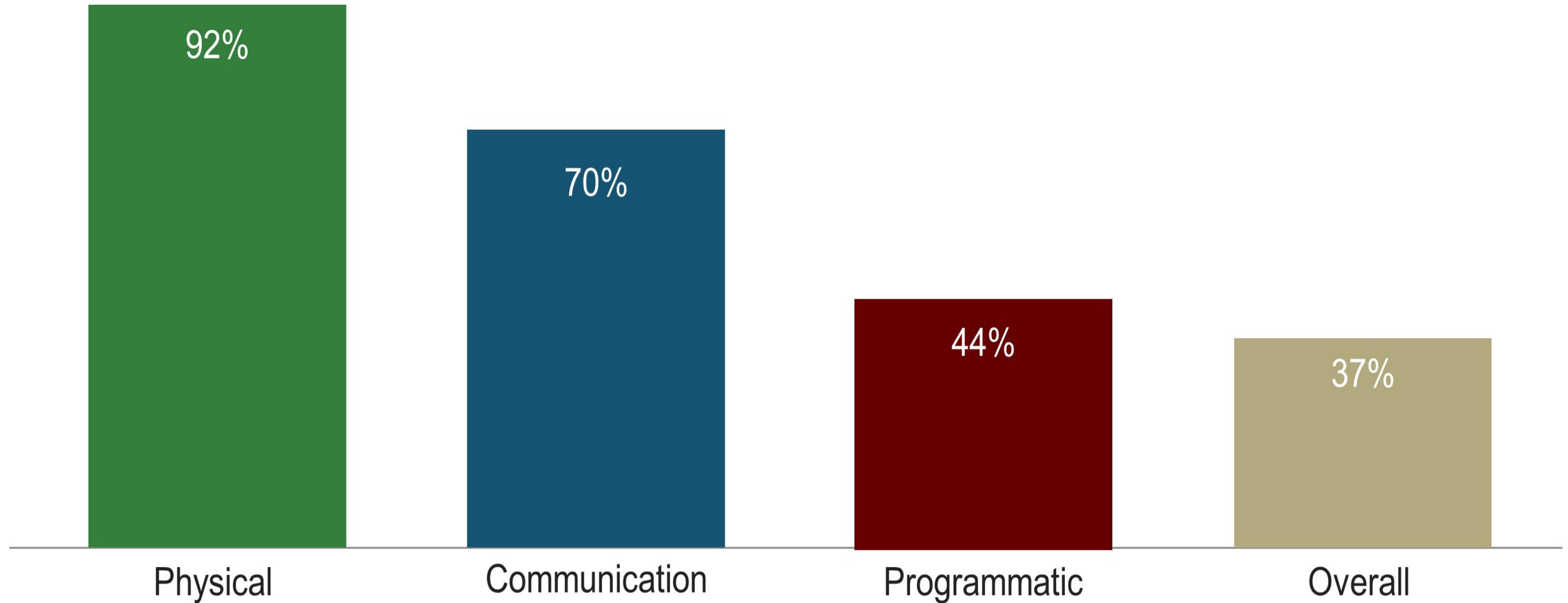
LEVELS OF ACCESSIBILITY

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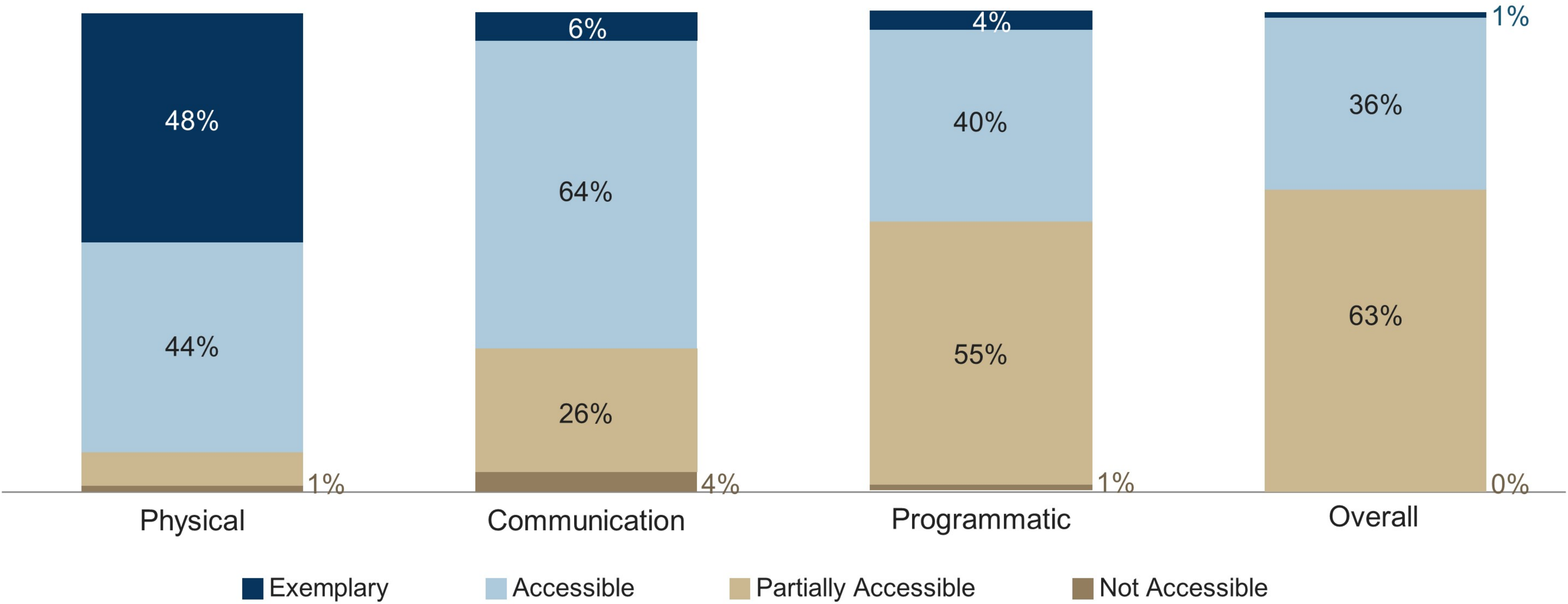
FULLY ACCESSIBLE	EXEMPLARY Centers have gone the extra mile to ensure that all people can participate to the same extent/in essentially the same way
	ACCESSIBLE All people can participate to the same extent/in essentially the same way
NOT FULLY ACCESSIBLE	PARTIALLY ACCESSIBLE People with disabilities can participate in some services/programs/activities but not in others, or not in the same way
	NOT ACCESSIBLE People with disabilities really cannot participate in the same way as other AJC customers



FINDINGS



FOUR LEVELS OF AJC CENTER ACCESSIBILITY¹⁴





RECOMMENDATIONS

INCREASING PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

- ▶ Ensure emergency alarm system has audio and visual signals
- ▶ Install lever-held or automatic faucets
- ▶ Install power operated doors

INCREASING COMMUNICATION ACCESSIBILITY

- ▶ Install hands-free speaker phones with large keypads and technology-based options for the hearing impaired
- ▶ Have materials in accessible formats (e.g., braille, large print, audio recorded)
- ▶ Provide staff training on conducting text based telephone calls or how to use assistive technology
- ▶ Provide sign language interpreters
- ▶ At least one workstation should be fully accessible with a large monitor (at least 19" with a moveable mounting arm), screen reading software, voice output capability, large keyboard caps and keyboard orientation aids, a height adjustable table, word prediction software

INCREASING PROGRAMMATIC ACCESSIBILITY

- ▶ Provide staff awareness and training
- ▶ Include disability specialist on staff, staff with disabilities
- ▶ Include benefits counseling
- ▶ Collaborate across service agencies
- ▶ Target outreach to disability community
- ▶ Involve people with disabilities in center operations



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