



For Immediate Release
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MADIGAN SECURES AGREEMENT TO BRING NEEDED ACCESSIBILITY TO WATSEKA

City to Build New \$1.5 million accessible City Hall and Police Station, Modify City Buildings, and Implement Accessible Curb Ramp Installation Program

Chicago – The Office of Attorney General Lisa Madigan recently entered into a settlement agreement with the city of Watseka under which the city will bring its facilities and sidewalks into compliance with state and federal accessibility laws. The agreement resolves the Attorney General's investigation of Watseka's curb ramps, city hall, police station, fire station, library, and public pool for accessibility violations. The Attorney General's office launched the investigation after receiving complaints about the accessibility of city facilities.

“All Illinois residents have a right to access local government buildings, programs and services,” said Attorney General Madigan. “This agreement with the city of Watseka is designed to ensure that individuals with disabilities will not encounter physical barriers to accessing programs and activities at public buildings.”

Under the terms of the agreement, the city of Watseka will construct a new \$1.5 million city hall and police station that complies with state and federal accessibility laws and will renovate its fire station, library and public pool to ensure access for individuals with disabilities.

In addition to requiring the construction and modification of public buildings, the agreement mandates that the city install or replace curb ramps throughout the entire city to bring all curb ramps into compliance with state and federal law.

“Without compliant curb ramps, people who use wheelchairs are prohibited from traveling safely throughout their own hometown, often having to resort to dangerous alternatives, such as traveling in the street instead of on a sidewalk. Watseka has agreed to correct this problem city-wide,” Madigan said.

The Attorney General's Disability Rights Bureau enforces state and federal laws that protect the rights of people with disabilities to equal access to all aspects of life by investigating complaints and resolving violations through negotiations and, when necessary, litigation. In addition to enforcement work, the Bureau provides technical assistance to individuals with disabilities and public and private entities seeking to comply with disability rights laws. Last

year, the Bureau responded to more than 1,500 requests for information related to disability issues.

The City of Watseka case was handled by Assistant Attorney General Erin Ipjian.

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