

ADA THREAT EXAMPLES

Here is a view of patterns and real examples so you can see what is actually happening on the ground with ADA lawsuits focused on digital accessibility.

Big Picture: Who Is Getting Hit

A few data points tell the story:

In 2023 there were more than 4,605 ADA Title III website accessibility lawsuits filed in federal court, up about 14 percent from the prior year.

Retail, restaurants, healthcare and financial services were the top targets.

One analysis of 2023 ADA lawsuits found that about 77 percent of defendants had under 25 million dollars in revenue, which places many squarely in the “small and mid-sized local business” band, not big corporate chains.

Website and mobile app cases have made up roughly one fifth of all ADA filings in federal courts since 2018.

More than 2,000 ADA website accessibility suits had been filed in 2025.

Separate tracking by accessibility vendors shows dozens of defendants in a single month being “mom and pop” restaurants, bars, jewelers, pharmacies, boutiques and even one-person consultancies.

So, the weight of evidence says this very much is a local-business problem, not just a Fortune 500 problem.

Concrete Examples of Local Businesses Sued Over Website Accessibility

Aviary Cafe And Creperie, Springfield, Missouri

A Springfield restaurant, Aviary Cafe and Creperie LLC, is facing a federal lawsuit alleging that its website is inaccessible to blind or partially sighted users.

The case, *Myers v. Aviary Cafe and Creperie, LLC* (W.D. Missouri, 2025), typifies a pattern: a single small hospitality business, sued over digital access rather than physical ramps or bathrooms.

The Preston House and Hotel, Riverhead, New York

On New York's North Fork, a wave of "cut and paste" suits hit dozens of local businesses, including The Preston House and Hotel, which was sued because its website was allegedly inaccessible to visually impaired users.

Local chambers of commerce described these as template lawsuits fired at multiple independents at once, not national chains.

Small Mexican restaurant, Los Angeles, California

A small independently owned Mexican restaurant in Los Angeles was sued when a visitor alleged the restaurant's simple brochure-style website was not ADA compliant.

The owner did not expect to be a target because of the tiny scale of the operation, but still had to pay attorney fees and deal with the stress of litigation.

Independent restaurants in St. Louis, Missouri

In 2025, a Kansas City attorney brought website accessibility suits against about two dozen local St. Louis restaurants, many independently owned, for alleged ADA non-compliance of their sites.

Local coverage framed this as "shakedown" litigation, where owners felt cornered into settlement because the cost of fighting exceeded the cost of paying.

Small restaurant clusters in California

A recap of California ADA website cases from January to July 2023 notes a concentration on small restaurant owners, many of whom are immigrants or non-native English speakers. These owners were sued over inaccessible restaurant sites, not just physical premises.

Solo E-Commerce shop owner on Shopify

A Shopify news feature tells the story of "Clay," an independent online store owner who was sued without warning for alleged website accessibility violations, despite being a non-corporate operator.

The story is anonymized, but it illustrates how even one-person online shops are pulled into ADA web cases.

Other small, non-corporate defendants

Several legal and design blogs describe additional examples, often without naming the business but with clear "local" profiles:

"Mom and pop" eyeglass retailers, online SaaS shops and small online retailers sued alongside big brands in website ADA cases.

A web designer recounts a small restaurant owner being surprised by an ADA web lawsuit over her very simple site.

Accessibility vendors and law firms routinely mention local bars, jewelers, small boutiques, pharmacies and single-practitioner consultancies among defendants in Title III web cases.

How These Cases Usually Look

From the cases and commentary, a few recurring traits emerge.

Typical industries

Local businesses being sued over website accessibility include:

- Independent restaurants and cafes
- Small hotels, inns and bed-and-breakfasts with online booking or room info
- Local retailers and e-commerce shops
- Professional services such as small medical practices, law offices and consultancies

All of these are “places of public accommodation” under Title III, so their websites can be drawn into ADA disputes when digital access blocks someone from using the business’s services.

Common Website Problems Cited

The same issues appear again and again:

- Sites that do not work with screen readers
- Missing alt text on images
- Forms and buttons that lack labels, so assistive tech cannot interpret
- Navigation that cannot be used by keyboard only
- Online booking that does not disclose whether rooms or services are accessible
- Color contrast too low for visually impaired users

These are all core violations of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which most regulators and courts look to when deciding whether a site is effectively accessible.

Serial Plaintiffs and Law Firms

A repeated pattern is the “tester” or serial plaintiff:

Legal analyses describe serial plaintiffs and “self-appointed testers” who visit many businesses or sites in a day, looking for technical accessibility violations and then filing large numbers of suits.

In New York City, one wheelchair user has filed more than a hundred ADA suits, with small neighborhood businesses among the defendants, prompting pushback over “shakedown” tactics.

The same model is now applied aggressively to websites, not just physical ramps and signage.

Financial Impact on Small, Local Businesses

While judgment amounts vary, the pattern is clear:

A web-accessibility vendor estimates that dealing with a single ADA web lawsuit costs a small business roughly 25,000 dollars, including legal fees and remediation.

One small-business case cited by an ADA compliance company involved a \$1,000 dollar settlement but \$3,000 to \$4,000 dollars in attorneys’ fees, just to resolve the matter.

Business groups describe ADA suits as capable of “sinking” a small business given the volume of cases and the cost of compliance after the fact.

Many of these owners had no idea their little site was on anyone’s radar until the complaint arrived.

Demand Letters, Scams and Real Lawsuits

There is a spectrum from scammy letters to real, filed federal cases:

Small-business owners on Reddit report getting threatening letters about ADA website violations from non-attorneys or dubious companies that are essentially trying to sell services. Several responses characterize these as scams that can be ignored, although others recommend talking to a lawyer either way.

By contrast, the Aviary Cafe case, the Preston House suit and the California and St. Louis restaurant clusters are filed federal actions with real dockets and real exposure.

For deeper research you would want to distinguish between “marketing scare letters” and actual Title III cases on PACER or state-court systems.