

SAGE CERTIFICATION™

The global standard for
accessible travel,
hospitality and events.



MOBILITY



VISION



HEARING



NEURODIVERGENT



ALLERGY

Introduction and Purpose of Sage Certification™

People with disabilities represent one of the **largest and most underserved** segments of the travel and events market. Despite growing awareness of accessibility requirements, many still face barriers when using accommodations, attractions, venues, and other facilities. At the same time, businesses often lack a reliable way to communicate accessibility accurately.

This creates challenges for both customers and service providers. Travelers need trustworthy information to determine whether a facility meets their requirements, while businesses need a credible way to demonstrate accessibility and identify opportunities for improvement.

The importance of addressing this issue is reflected in market demand. People with disabilities account for approximately **20% of the population**, while **50% of all seniors** live with a disability. When accessibility needs are met, these travelers demonstrate strong loyalty, longer stays, and higher likelihood to travel in non-peak periods.

Accessible travel is also increasingly important for business travelers and event planners. Research shows that **93% of disabled event attendees** still encounter barriers when attending events, highlighting the need for improved accessibility across the sector.



Sage Certification™ provides an independent and credible **way of evaluating accessibility and recognizing facilities** that address the needs of people with disabilities. It helps organizations

- assess their accessibility,
- identify opportunities for improvement,
- and communicate information more accurately and transparently.

At the same time, it enables travelers, business travel managers, and event planners to **make more informed decisions**.

Sage Certification supports improved customer experiences and broader participation in travel, tourism, hospitality, and events through a consistent framework for accessibility recognition.



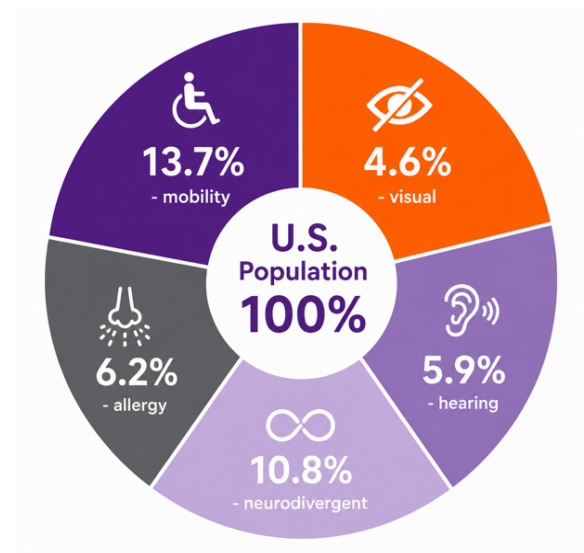
Disability Types Addressed in Sage Certification™

Disabilities can be grouped in different ways. For the purposes of Sage Certification™, accessibility is evaluated across **five disability categories**: mobility, vision, hearing, neurodivergent, and allergy-related accessibility. These categories are based on the disability classifications used by the U.S. Census and reflect a broad range of accessibility needs that may affect how individuals access and use facilities, services, and information.



The percentages shown represent the proportion of the U.S. population that identifies with each disability category.

Assessing each category separately allows Sage Certification™ to provide a more accurate picture of accessibility performance and more meaningful information for both organizations and their customers.



Methodology

Because no single international standard fully addresses accessibility across all travel, tourism, hospitality, and event environments, Sage Certification™ methodology is based on **Sage Accessibility Standard**, a comprehensive accessibility framework informed by

- Two international standards:
 - ISO 21542:2021 (Building Construction – Accessibility and Usability of the Built Environment),
 - ISO 21902:2021 (Tourism and Related Services – Accessible Tourism for All – Requirements and Recommendations),
- Four national accessibility standards:
 - USA - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards
 - UK - BS 8300-1:2018 & BS 8300-2:2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment.
 - UAE - Universal Design Code Final
 - CAN - ASC-2.3 A model standard for the built environment – accessibility (draft, not a standard)
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 for digital accessibility,
- Travel Sector Guidelines, and more than fifteen years of experience in accessible travel planning for thousands of travelers with disabilities.



All facilities are assessed according to Sage Accessibility Standard.

Facilities within the United States are assessed against both Sage Accessibility Standard and the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Each assessed feature is assigned one of the following statuses:

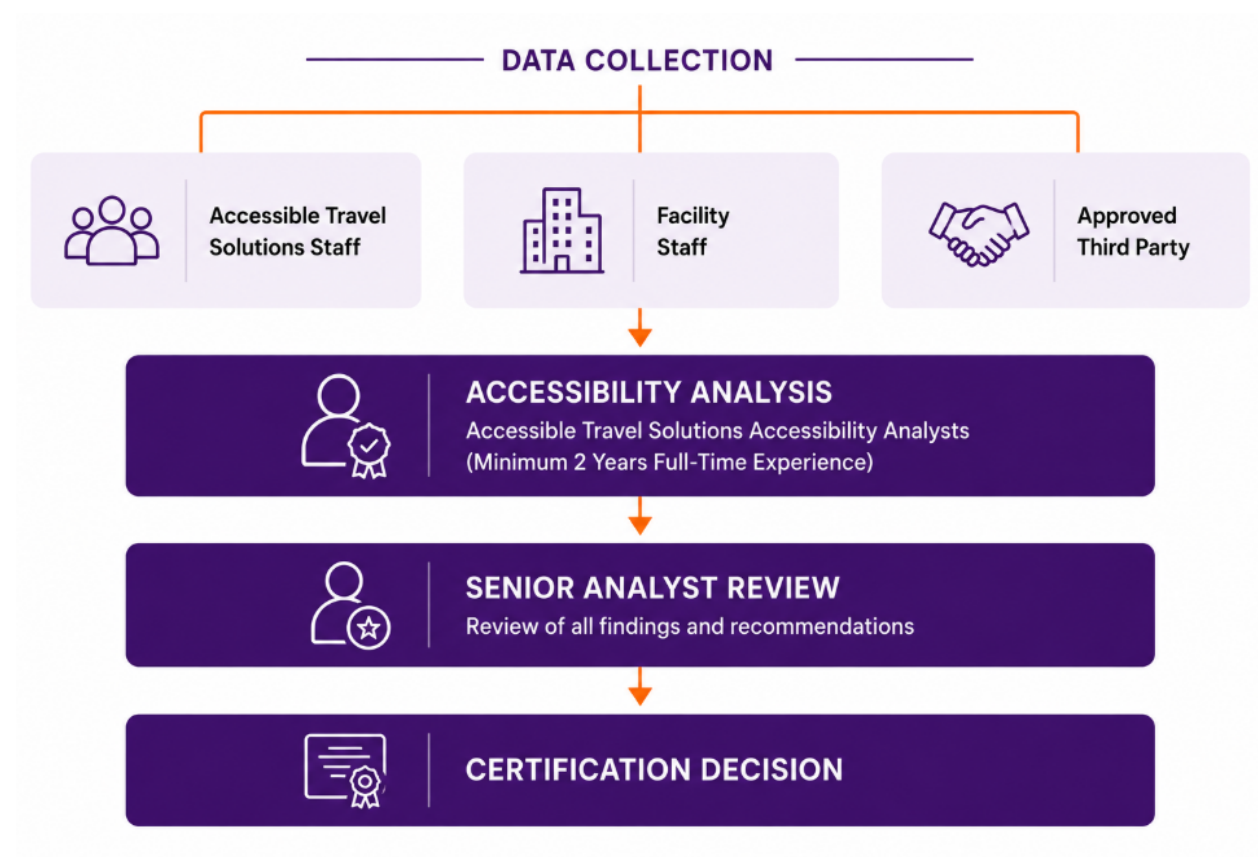
✓	The accessibility feature meets Sage Accessibility Standard and is legally compliant.
X	The accessibility feature does not meet Sage Accessibility Standard. Enhancements are recommended to improve the guest experience.
X!!	The accessibility feature does not meet Sage Accessibility Standard and is not legally compliant. *For facilities located within the United States

Accessibility Analyst Requirements

Data collection may be conducted by an Accessible Travel Solutions employee, a staff member of the assessed facility, or an approved third party.

However, all data evaluation, analysis, and certification decisions are performed exclusively by Accessible Travel Solutions accessibility analysts.

To ensure consistency and quality, Accessible Travel Solutions accessibility analysts are required to have a minimum of two years of full-time professional experience in accessible travel and accessibility evaluation. In addition, all assessment findings and certification recommendations are subject to review by a Senior Accessibility Analyst before a certification decision is finalized.



Certification workflow

Stage 1 – Planning and Preparation

The certification process begins with planning and preparation. During this stage, the facility submits a request for certification and receives information about the certification scope, requirements, and process. Following acceptance of the certification proposal and agreement, the assessment is scheduled, and the necessary facility information is collected.

Stage 2 – Accessibility Assessment

The facility undergoes a comprehensive accessibility assessment conducted in accordance with the Sage Certification™ methodology. Depending on the size and complexity of the facility, hundreds of accessibility features may be evaluated. For example, a standard hotel assessment typically includes approximately **350–450 accessibility features**. The assessment covers a broad range of accessibility elements relevant to mobility, vision, hearing, neurodivergent, and allergy-related accessibility. Following the assessment, the findings are reviewed and analyzed, and an internal assessment report is prepared. Facilities may use this stage to address identified accessibility gaps or provide additional information before certification is finalized.

Stage 3 – Evaluation and Certification Decision

Following completion of the assessment, accessibility analysts review the collected evidence and evaluate the facility against the certification requirements. While hundreds of accessibility features may be assessed, certification focuses on **accessibility features required for independent use** by people with different disabilities. Based on this evaluation, a certification decision is issued, and the facility receives the applicable Sage badges and certification documentation. Certification remains valid for three years, subject to ongoing maintenance of accessibility conditions and recertification at the end of the certification period.



1

PLANNING & PREPARATION



REQUEST



SCOPE



AGREEMENT



SCHEDULE

2

ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT



DATA COLLECTION

350-450
DATA POINTS COLLECTED



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FINDINGS
ANALYSIS



INTERNAL
REPORT



OPTIONAL
REMEDiation

3

EVALUATION & CERTIFICATION DECISION



EVIDENCE
REVIEW



FEATURES
EVALUATION



CERTIFICATION
DECISION



CERTIFICATE
& BADGES



VALID FOR
3 YEARS



RECERTIFICATION
EVERY 3 YEARS

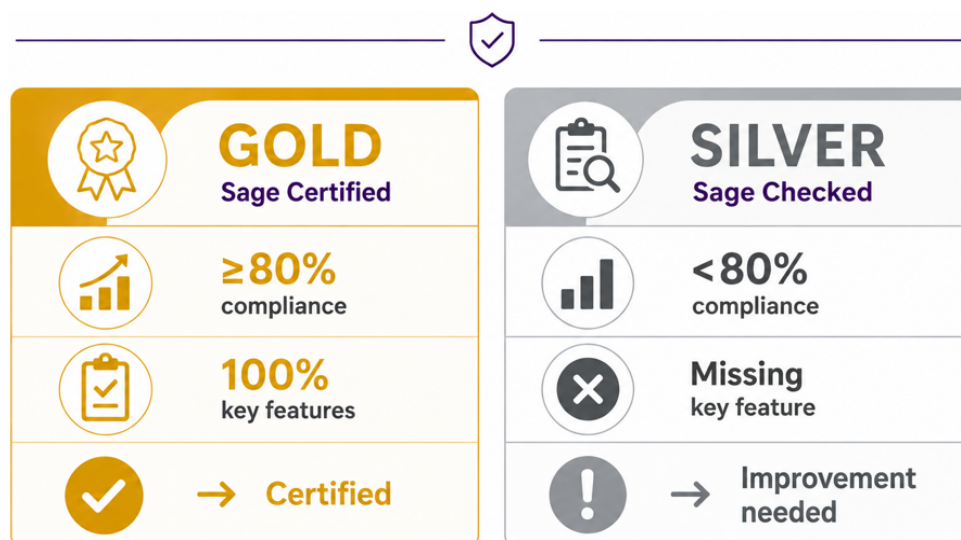
Scoring System, Key Features, and Certification Levels

Sage Certification evaluates accessibility separately for each of the five disability categories: mobility, vision, hearing, neurodivergent, and allergy-related accessibility. Each category receives its own score based on the accessibility features that are relevant to that group.

However, the certification result is not determined by score alone. Some accessibility features are identified as **key features** because they are essential for independent use of the facility by people with a particular disability. If one of these key features is missing, it may create a significant accessibility barrier, even if the overall score is high.

Facilities that have completed the accessibility assessment, understand their accessibility features and barriers, and can accurately answer accessibility questions asked by a potential disabled visitor, receive a **Silver “Sage Checked” badge**. These facilities have achieved a significant milestone in addressing one of the industries biggest challenges: accessibility information.

To receive a **Gold “Sage Certified”** badge for a disability category, a facility must also achieve at least 80% compliance with all assessed features and 100% compliance with all applicable key features. These facilities meet the most important accessibility requirements defined by Sage Accessibility Standard.



Certification Results, Badge System, Validity, and Recertification

Upon completion of the certification process, the facility receives a certificate and five certification results, one for each disability category: mobility, vision, hearing, neurodivergent, and allergy-related accessibility. Depending on the results achieved in each category, the facility is awarded either a Silver **“Sage Checked”** badge or a Gold **“Sage Certified”** badge.



This approach recognizes that accessibility levels may vary across disability types. As a result, a facility may achieve different certification results for different disability categories, providing a more accurate representation of its accessibility performance.

Certification remains valid for a period of **three years**. At the end of this period, recertification is required to verify accessibility conditions and assess any changes or improvements made since the previous assessment.

To maintain the accuracy and credibility of the certification, facilities are required to notify Accessible Travel Solutions of any significant accessibility-related modifications made during the certification period. This ensures that certification results continue to reflect the facility's current accessibility conditions.