

Access Kosciusko



Alli Simpson

Miller's Merry Manor

Kathy Madden

Lake City Bank

Andrea Brubaker

Teachers Credit Union

Kosciusko Leadership Academy 2019

Table of Contents

- I. Executive Summary**
- II. About Access Kosciusko**
- III. Vision (Goals)**
- IV. Sustainability**
- V. Community Impact**
- VI. Appendix**

I. Executive Summary

We take accessibility for granted. Those of us that move about our county, going about our daily life, never pause to look for ramps, accessible restrooms or automatic doors. We are able to live our lives freely and accordingly; however, this is not the case for 1 in 7 adults that have mobility issues (Disabled). This statistic does not include our aging population or those that have temporary limitations due to sudden accidents or surgery.

What if there was an easy way to access the information you needed to plan going out to dinner or to visit your favorite local shops? To be more independent when you visit your doctor's office? Access Kosciusko can help fill these gaps and make an impact on our community.

The mission of Access Kosciusko is to create a web based application to promote accessibility within Kosciusko County. Individuals and caregivers can access the web based application from a computer, tablet, or mobile device. In addition to this, the web based application will promote businesses in Kosciusko County that are accessible to individuals that have physical restrictions or handicaps.

The vision of Access Kosciusko is to complete the web based application in four phases. The first phase of the development and launching of the app to promote accessible eateries. The second phase will promote accessibility at medical offices. The third phase will promote the accessibility of recreational areas. The fourth phase will promote accessibility of retail locations. Marketing and advertising will also be a key factor in all phases.

II. About Access Kosciusko

The idea for Access Kosciusko first came to light when a caregiver of individuals shared their frustrations of day to day outings with one of our group members. The caregiver attempted to visit a local restaurant and upon arriving, encountered the first barrier. The handicap parking was located across the street. This prevented them from being able to enter the establishment since they were physically restricted. It can be frustrating trying to find handicap accessible parking close to the entrance, locating a restroom that is large enough to accommodate a wheelchair, or a ramp into the building. With today's progressive technology and use of mobile devices, why isn't there a way to easily search accessible places in our county?

If this caregiver had Access Kosciusko, they would be able to find another restaurant that met their needs. Our project would enable users to search locations listed using the five accessibility legends. The legends are a wheelchair ramp, an automatic door, stairs, handicap parking and a handicap accessible bathroom. These legends are displayed in a straightforward way and explained in the menu section.

Our project can be accessed from a computer, laptop, tablet or mobile device. With the tablet or mobile device option, the user is able to add the application to their home screen. With its user friendly and easy to navigate design, it allows Access Kosciusko to be accommodating to an individual whether they are more comfortable with a computer or a mobile device.

III. Vision

The vision of our project is to bridge the gap of accessibility by providing a navigation tool for those with limited ability to find locations to meet their needs within our county. With a few clicks, not only can you find an establishment to meet your needs, but you can also get directions and be linked directly to their website. Our project is set to be completed in four phases. The first initial phase of Access Kosciusko included the development of the web based application. This phase will cover eateries in Kosciusko County that are accessible. Once the research has been finished and compiled, the information will be uploaded.

The second phase will incorporate doctor and medical offices in the county. Kosciusko Community Hospital (KCH) has agreed to include information about the application in promotional and marketing tools that will include flyers and visibility on the hospital website. Promotional flyers will be distributed during the discharge process to the patient leaving the hospital to home health, a skilled nursing facility, or back to their residence.

We will include the recreational sites around Kosciusko County that are accessible in the third phase. Our county is known for its many lakes and other recreational venues, and our project can show visitors, as well as prospective visitors to our county, not only what there is to see and do, but what sites are available to those with limited mobility.

The final phase will focus on retail locations in our county. Retail locations are necessary for day to day needs. Being able to shop for groceries or clothing can be something that most people often overlook as a normal routine; Access Kosciusko would provide a feeling of independence for those in the community that require specific features.

IV. Sustainability

Our KLA team with Chris Jones has already put the application into motion with full administrative rights that will be handed over to KCH once the project is complete. We have commitment from Joy Lohse, the Marketing and Public Relations Director for KCH, together with Matt Metzger, the Director of Marketing at Grace College, to oversee, update and manage the application.

They foresee that the application could be updated quarterly by a student of Grace College. If Access Kosciusko wins the Northenor Award, the funds could be used at a rate of \$150 per year to watch over the project for the next 4 years. The remainder of the award could be utilized for marketing materials such as flyers or pamphlets to be distributed throughout the county.

In order to further promote Access Kosciusko, we have talked to organizations such as the Kosciusko County Convention and Visitors Bureau as well as the Kosciusko Chamber of Commerce. They have agreed to include a link on their website highlighting our site once it is complete.

V. Community Impact

This service will have a vast impact on individuals in Kosciusko County. Individuals with physical restrictions or handicaps can utilize this service to feel more independent when out in the community. Caregivers can also take advantage of this application to ease frustrations during community outings, as well as individuals that suddenly find themselves restricted due to unforeseen injuries or surgery.

Imagine you are injured in a car accident and you find yourself temporarily confined to a wheelchair or a walker. Suddenly you're at your favorite coffee shop only to realize that their one and only restroom is not large enough for you to accommodate your wheelchair. Or your friends invite you on an afternoon of shopping, and the storefront does not have a ramp for you to use to enter, should you miss out? With Access Kosciusko you can plan your day and your life around these limitations.

This project can also be used to bring awareness to people in our county that may not understand the frustrations of being unable to use the restroom because the stall is not large enough to accommodate a wheelchair. It will help individuals with physical restrictions or disabilities feel more independent in the community. Simple joys of being out in the community can have a positive impact on an individual with a physical restriction.

Access Kosciusko has the potential to benefit the businesses that are housed on the site. The web based application will link users to websites of businesses that are featured in the application with owner permission. It can be used as a marketing tool for businesses to promote their accessibility and will be a positive resource to help the community.

VI. Work Cited

Disabled World. "Disability Statistics: Information, Charts, Graphs and Tables." *Disabled World*, Disabled World, 2 Oct. 2018, www.disabled-world.com/disability/statistics/.