Assistive Listening Systems-Overview
ADA Standards for Accessible Design (2010)

ADA Section 219

"In each assembly area where audible communication is integral to the use of the space, an assistive listening system shall be provided."

ADA Definitions

"*Assembly Area.* A building or facility, or portion thereof, used for the purpose of entertainment, educational or civic gatherings, or similar purposes. For the purposes of these requirements, assembly areas include, but are not limited to, classrooms, lecture halls, courtrooms, public meeting rooms, public hearing rooms, legislative chambers, motion picture houses, auditoria, theaters, playhouses, dinner theaters, concert halls, centers for the performing arts, amphitheaters, arenas, stadiums, grandstands, or convention centers."

"*Assistive Listening System (ALS).* An amplification system utilizing transmitters, receivers, and coupling devices to bypass the acoustical space between a sound source and a listener by means of induction loop, radio frequency, infrared, or direct-wired equipment."

ADA Standards Details

For signage, receiver/headset/neckloop ratios, technical specifications, etc., please see the ADA standards: https://www.ada.gov/2010ADAstandards_index.htm. These include:

- 25% of the receivers must be hearing aid compatible, e.g., the ALS receiver must be usable with an induction neckloop that interfaces with the telecoil in an individual's personal hearing aid or cochlear implant.
- Receivers must have a 1/8 inch (3.5 mm) standard monojack

Three Types of Wireless Systems

	People without hearing aids, or hearing aids with no telecoils	Hearing aids with telecoils or cochlear implants with telecoils
Infrared (limited users)	Receiver & headset	Receiver and neckloop
FM system (limited users)	Receiver & headset	Receiver and neckloop
Hearing loop (UNLIMITED users)	Receiver & headset	**Nothing!** 😊

Why Use an Assistive Listening System?

"Distance from the sound source, background noise, and reverberation combine to degrade signal intelligibility, making it difficult for people to hear and understand speech in large rooms. For people with hearing loss, the challenge becomes even greater. Even the best public address systems, combined with the best hearing aid and/or cochlear implant, cannot solve the intelligibility problems faced by people with hearing loss. This situation prevents people with hearing loss from participating on equal terms with hearing people in large assembly areas. To provide people with equal access in these and other venues, requirements for making assistive listening systems available in places of public accommodation were included in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)." ©2006 Cynthia Compton-Conley, Ph.D., Gallaudet University. ©2015 Revision, Cynthia Compton-Conley, Ph.D. "Comparison of Large Area Assistive Listening Systems"