

Businesses Blindsided: Thousands sued for ADA violations on their websites

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ORLANDO, Fla — “It said that we were indeed being sued five days before Christmas,” said Ajeeta Khanna. The Orlando flower shop owner was talking about the moment she found out her business had been hit with a lawsuit in late 2024.

She said it was a crippling lawsuit that alleged the company website wasn't in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. And Action 9 found thousands of businesses across the country may have been blindsided by similar lawsuits.

Businesses large and small across central Florida have been targeted with these types of ADA lawsuits including Walt Disney Parks and Resorts and Fun Spot.

Any business with a website could be targeted by this type of lawsuit and experts tell Action 9 it's nearly impossible to be 100% compliant with the ADA requirements.

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While some believe the lawsuits help bring change for the blind, others believe most of these lawsuits are more about making money, than making a difference.

At Leaf & Blossom, Co., the small flower shop Ajeeta Khanna and her mom Kitty run, the two said the lawsuit was a shock.

"We're just literally five people. We're not like fifty employees in, you know, a huge building or anything," Ajeeta Khanna told Action 9 Consumer Investigator Jeff Deal.

A third-party runs most of their website, and they believed it complied with ADA standards.

Khanna said, "I'm just sitting there thinking, 'What on earth? Is this a scam?'"

They paid out more than \$7,000 in legal fees and settlement payments after their attorney told them it was cheaper to settle than to fight the lawsuit.

Action 9 and teams from the other Cox Media Group stations combed through tens of thousands of lawsuits across the country. The teams found more than 15,000 cases in the past 4-years claiming visually impaired people had trouble accessing a company's website. In 2025 alone, they tracked nearly 4,000 cases and 90% were filed by just 16 law firms.

Those firms include Roderick V. Hannah Esq. from south Florida who often works with The Law Office of Pelayo Duran. One of their clients is Victor Ariza, a blind man who has sued hundreds of businesses including Walt Disney Parks, SeaWorld and the Leaf & Blossom, Co. flower shop in Orlando.

Action 9 caught up with Victor Ariza at his Miami apartment.

Consumer Investigator Jeff Deal asked, "Do you think that the lawsuits have helped the blind?"

Answering in Spanish, Ariza said, "100%. A lot, of course."

As an advocate, he insists they mostly target large established businesses and believes the lawsuits have made a difference in bringing website accessibility for the visually impaired, but he admitted he couldn't recall using Leaf & Blossom's website.

"Let's see, because as there are so many, there are so many (cases) that I don't remember," Ariza said.

Action 9 called, emailed, and stopped by law offices for Pelayo Duran and Roderick Hannah, but so far neither attorney has commented on the cases. But one plaintiff attorney our teams spoke with doesn't believe in the high-volume strategy.

"I'm not an advocate of that approach, and in fact, I think it can actually be a disservice to the disabled community," said attorney Bruce Carlson.

Carlson began filing website accessibility cases more than a decade ago. He said litigation can force change, but should be strategic with legitimate claims.

Small business owner Nayan Padrai was offended when he got sued even after working to make his website accessible.

Padrai said, "I am morally aghast by what is going on."

Since his business was sued, he's made it his life's mission to expose what he calls serial filers. He's even producing a documentary to try to show what he believes, that most of the suits are aimed at quick settlements to make money for attorneys.

Padrai and Ajeeta Khanna now want lawmakers to get involved to pass federal legislation that clarifies the website requirements and gives businesses a warning and grace period to correct any problems before a lawsuit can be filed.

Ajeeta Khanna said, "That's unfair to us. We're hard working. Why should we ding our bottom line? Why should be cut into our expenses for something so frivolous."

Critics of the lawsuits contend they not only hurts businesses, but in the end all consumers pay for it if the businesses have to raise prices. Despite the thousands of lawsuits, so far, Action 9 and the other Cox Media Group stations haven't found a single case that has gone to trial. They all get settled or dismissed.

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