

BASICS OF ACCESSIBILITY:

- Proof of disability is not required to request accommodations
- Accessibility does not end at wheelchair accessibility
- Language matters. **Disability** not “special needs” or “handicapped” or any other term, though each individual has preferences, so cede to their preferences
- Include accessibility in Emergency Planning
- Communication is key
- Website and Social Media accessibility are key to being accessible: promoting accessibility communicates to the disabled community that they are included
- Allow requests for reasonable accommodations
- Never infantilize a disabled person. Do not make assumptions, always ask.

To be truly inclusive, you can reach out to disability groups, organizations, professional accessibility and disability advisors, and invite people with disabilities into your organization.

Social Media:

- Hashtags: use Camel Case
- Caption video content
- Images: use alt text and ideally also image descriptions
- <https://www.accessliving.org/newsroom/guide-basic-accessibility-on-social-media/>

Events

- COVID19 precautions
- Bathroom access
- Ramps and elevators
- Accessible web design (see below)
- Pre-event communication about accommodations provided
- Accessible registration
- Staff trained in disability etiquette
- Assigned seating cannot request or require proof of disability, must be at the same price
- Inclusivity signage: post warnings about events with loud noises, flashing lights, smoke and fog machines, scent or chemical components, as these may trigger many chronic conditions
- Provide a variety of seating options

Invisible Disabilities:

MOST DISABILITIES ARE INVISIBLE DISABILITIES

- Access to food and water (even in restricted areas)
- Quiet room / sensory space
- Medical waste receptacle (needle box)
- Explicit communication
- Written instructions
- Headphones (noise cancelling)

- Schedule flexibility
- Allowing seating and various table-levels
- Appropriate lighting (non-flourescent, no flickering)
- Remote options
- Creating an inclusive environment starts from the top down
- Patience, Patience, Patience
- Ask “What do you need?” or “Do you need help?”

Mobility Challenge:

- Not all mobility challenges are solved by ramps
- Provide enough parking spaces, extra temporary spaces may be necessary for large events
- Accessible public transportation is important
- Building entrances need to be wide enough and with easy to open doors
- Aisles should remain clear of clutter, cords, and other impediments to wheelchairs and scooters

D/deaf or Hard of Hearing

- ASL or other variety or sign language interpreter (for an individual)
- Open or Closed Captioning services, preferred for events with multiple speakers and attendees
- Assistive Listening Devices
- Verbatim print materials
- Interpreters working for more than one hour often work in teams of two, and it is recommended to hire a team for *each* Deaf student/attendee. They should be provided with materials ahead of time to prepare, as ASL is not an English equivalent, and there are not signs for everything. Advance access to slides, notes, handouts, and material and opportunity to ask questions gives interpreters time to work with unfamiliar terms
- **Not all people who are D/deaf use ASL**, this is why captioned content is preferred over interpreters for groups and crowds.
- Look at a Deaf person when you’re speaking, but do not speak slower than usual
- Consider loudspeaker announcements, as they are not accessible
- Look at and address the individual and not the interpreter when communicating

Blind or Low Vision

- Provide sufficient lighting
- Produce large-print versions of handouts (min 16pt font, sans serif, avoid all caps)
- Provide recorded or live auditory descriptions or artwork
- Digital material, like PDFs, should be screen-reader friendly
- Do not overuse special characters, like emojis

Service Animals

- The only questions allowed for service animals are: is the dog a trained service animal?
- Service dogs are working. Do not pet, feed, or play with a working dog.

Website Accessibilities

- Ensure all website text is easy to read: Increase contrast, avoid graphics that replace text, and include text descriptions for images.
- Provide larger buttons and plenty of space between buttons for people with low vision or mobility impairments.
- Follow a logical heading structure to aid in navigation.
- Ensure the website is accessible via keyboard and avoid mouse-only interaction.
- Use descriptive link text rather than the generic Click here : Add the hyperlink to Download your registration form.
- Provide video captions and transcripts.
- If your event has a ticket purchase or registration time limit, consider people using assistive devices when setting the purchase timeout and extend it.
- Offer a clear accessibility statement on your website, and encourage attendees to reach out with any questions or concerns they may have.
- Ditch the CAPTCHA”spam is frustrating, but a CAPTCHA is not accessible for people with low vision or blindness.