

How to Conduct an Accessible Meeting

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Workshop Goals

- ▶ Provide information to assist you in planning and conducting an accessible training, meeting, or conference.
- ▶ Provide simple and easy steps you can take to ensure that your meetings, trainings, or conferences are truly accessible for all participants.

Workshop Objectives

- ▶ You will learn how to identify accessibility needs and requirements in regard to training materials, venue selection, and logistics.
- ▶ You will learn to achieve universal accessibility for all of your organization's activities and events in a cost-effective and stress-free manner.

Why Universal Access?

- ▶ Americans with disabilities are one of the largest growing minority groups in the United States.
- ▶ The 2005 U.S. Census Bureau indicated that about 20% of the American population reported having a disability.
- ▶ In other words, one in five or 54.4 million Americans have some type of disability.

Accessibility Laws

There are several Federal laws that require access for individuals with disabilities:

- ▶ The Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) of 1968
- ▶ Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- ▶ The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA was signed in 1990 and gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion in the following areas:

- ▶ ADA Title I: Employment
- ▶ ADA Title II: State and Local Governments
- ▶ ADA Title III: Public Accommodations
- ▶ ADA Title IV: Telecommunications Relay Services

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

- ▶ The intent of the ADA is to provide persons with disabilities with accommodations and **equal access** to programs and services that are available to the general population.
- ▶ It also mandates that when conducting a meeting or event, you must be in compliance with the ADA and provide equal access for all participants.

Accommodating someone with a disability?

▶ Don't panic, program participants are familiar with their disability, **they need your expertise in dealing with the issues surrounding their participation in your event.**

▶ **Important: Remember to speak with and about individuals with disabilities with respect and dignity.**

What do we take for granted?

- ▶ Access to meeting location
- ▶ Participate in program activities
- ▶ Review program/event materials
- ▶ Access to the buffet lines

Things to Consider When Planning an Event or Meeting

- ▶ Participants utilizing assistive mobility devices; wheelchairs or canes.
- ▶ Parking
- ▶ Size of space – How far from registration table to meeting rooms? How far from front desk to sleeping rooms?
- ▶ Are restrooms accessible?

Things to Consider When Planning an Event or Meeting

- ▶ Are materials accessible for participants who are blind or who have low vision?
- ▶ Are materials available in alternative formats such as Braille, audio or large print?
- ▶ Are food menus in alternative formats?
- ▶ Is signage in Braille?
- ▶ How would you get materials into alternative formats?

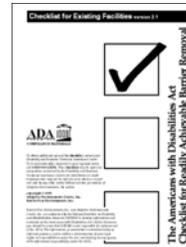
Things to Consider When Planning an Event or Meeting

- ▶ Is your staff or event staff accustomed to providing clear descriptive information for individuals who are blind?
- ▶ Are you and the event location prepared to have assistance dogs onsite?
- ▶ Is an ASL Interpreter available and onsite for attendees who are deaf or have limited hearing?

Be Prepared

- ▶ Always select a venue that is in compliance with the ADA.
- ▶ Utilize the “Americans with Disabilities Act Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal”. (Available on-line)

How do I assess my program for physical accessibility?



Determining Facility Accessibility

Priority 1: Accessible approach and entrance

Priority 2: Access to goods and services

Priority 3: Access to rest rooms

Priority 4: Any other measures necessary

Copies of this **checklist are available free on-line at**
<http://www.ada.gov/rachek.pdf>.

Prepare Materials

- ▶ Ensure that your registration materials include information regarding accessibility.
- ▶ Keep it simple, “If you need a personal accommodation during this event, please contact...”
- ▶ Always provide a contact person and a deadline for requesting accommodation. Minimum of a week in advance of event.

Who to Contact?

- ▶ Learn who to contact in your community for interpreter services, independent living centers, assistance dog organizations, governmental organizations.
- ▶ National resources, such as Assistance Dogs International or Working Like Dogs.
- ▶ Most importantly – contact the program participant requesting assistance.

Accessible Print Materials

Guidelines to Accommodate All Individuals

- ▶ Content should reflect all individuals and be culturally appropriate.
- ▶ Use dark lettering on light colored background – best to use non-glossy paper.
- ▶ Use simple text and fonts and eliminate special formatting.

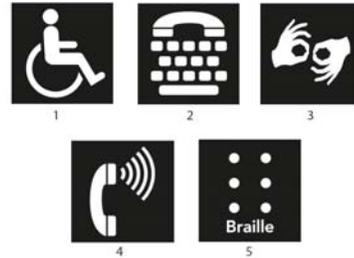
Accessible Print Materials

- ▶ Using left alignment is simplest format.
- ▶ If using photos, ensure a wide range of color contrast or grayscale.
- ▶ Use of “people first” language on all written materials.

People First Language

- ▶ People with disabilities are often stereotyped, thought to be depressed, in need of pity or heroes who beat the odds. In reality people with disabilities are just like everyone else.
- ▶ The best way to talk to a person with a disability is to talk the same way as you would anyone else.
- ▶ Individuals with disabilities **are not** conditions or diseases, they are human beings. They are first and foremost people and only secondarily do they have a disability.

Use of Five Access Symbols



Physical Accessibility

- ▶ Access Ramps to the facility, stage, parking lot, etc.
- ▶ Curb cuts in sidewalks and entrances
- ▶ Rearranging tables, chairs, vending machines, display racks and other furniture
- ▶ Repositioning telephones
- ▶ Designating a universal bathroom

Physical Accessibility

- ▶ Adding raised marking on elevator control buttons
- ▶ Installing flashing alarm lights
- ▶ Widening or removing doors
- ▶ Installing offset hinges to widen doorways
- ▶ Installing accessible door hardware

Physical Accessibility

- ▶ Installing grab bars in toilet stalls
- ▶ Rearranging toilet partitions to increase maneuvering space
- ▶ Eliminating a turnstile or providing an alternate path
- ▶ Insulating lavatory pipes under sinks to prevent burns
- ▶ Installing a raised toilet seat
- ▶ Installing a full length bathroom mirror

Physical Accessibility

- ▶ Repositioning a paper towel dispenser in the bathroom
- ▶ Creating designated accessible parking spaces
- ▶ Installing an accessible paper cup dispenser at an existing inaccessible water fountain
- ▶ Removing high pile, low density carpet

Agency Programmatic Accessibility

- ▶ Review and update agency policies and procedures
- ▶ Review your staff's ability and willingness toward identifying and accommodating individuals with disability needs
- ▶ Review own agency's physical accessibility
- ▶ Review communication and outreach efforts
- ▶ Provide additional staff education and training

Programmatic Accessibility

- ▶ Prepare a list of qualified interpreters and programs
- ▶ Purchase assistive listening devices
- ▶ Purchase telephone headset amplifiers
- ▶ Provide note-takers, if necessary
- ▶ Provide all written materials for persons with hearing loss in advance
- ▶ Telecommunications devices for persons who are deaf (TDDs)

Programmatic Accessibility

- ▶ Know who to contact for braille or large print materials for persons with visual loss
- ▶ Provide videotext displays
- ▶ Know where to contact qualified readers
- ▶ Be prepared to provide audio taped text
- ▶ Know who to contact to provide assistance with transportation

Assistive Devices

People can be of assistance to individuals with disabilities by acting as interpreters, personal care attendants, relay system operators, etc. When these individuals are performing these duties they should be treated as assistive "devices".

Focus on the individual with a disability.

Animals as Assistive Devices

Animals have been trained since the 18th century to assist individuals with disabilities in a number of ways.

The most common types of assistance dogs are guide dogs, service dogs, hearing alert, and seizure alert/seizure response dogs.

Legally the ADA defines an assistance dog as "... any dog that has been individually trained to provide assistance or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a physical or mental disability, substantially limiting one or more major life functions."



Behavior and Training Standards

Assistance Dogs International, Inc. (<http://www.adionline.org>) publishes the minimum standards for assistance dog training programs to ensure the highest level of performance, behavior, and quality in training and assistance dog performance.



Important Assistance Dog Etiquette

- ▶ Focus on the individual with a disability.
- ▶ Do not touch the Service Animal, or the person it assists, without permission.
- ▶ Do not make noises at the Service Animal; it may distract the animal from doing its job.
- ▶ Do not feed the Service Animal; it may disrupt his/her schedule.
- ▶ Do not be offended if the person does not feel like discussing his/her disability or the assistance the Service Animal provides. Not everyone wants to be a "show and tell" exhibit.



Accessible Meeting and Events

- ▶ Think outside the box and remember meeting space should be accessible for all individuals.
- ▶ Start by researching accessible locations in your community. Including non-traditional meeting spaces.
- ▶ Hotel Site Inspection List – use to help assess true accessibility of location.

DAVIS INNOVATIONS

Site Inspection

State of Property: _____

Location/City: _____

Site Inspection date: _____

Offered (date) for event: _____

Space available on requested dates? Yes No

Construction planned? Yes No
If yes, what dates? _____

Hotel appearance: welcoming attractive appealing safe neighborhood

Are there other hotels nearby? Yes No Construction: _____

Is the front lobby and registration desk well staffed? Yes No

Are the elevators easy to locate and use? Yes No

Public Spaces

Level front entrance or ramp? _____

Free of any obstacles - ground, curbs or stairs? Yes No

Is the grade very steep? _____

Entrance doors have a clear width of 32"? Yes No

Entrance doors open a minimum of 18" wide and 48" deep? Yes No

Elevators have low buttons and Braille markings? Yes No

Elevators have auditory signals? Yes No

Elevators have an automatic safety response device? Yes No

Adjacent restaurants still that open outdoors? Yes No

National Training Conference on Crime Victims with Disabilities
Accessibility Hotel Comparison

	JW Marriott Orlando, Canada Lakes www.granddels.com	JW Marriott Orlando, World Center www.marriott.com	Marriott Resort, Capri Place www.marriott.com	Four Seasons, Riverside/Stonecrest Marriott www.marriott.com
Available Dates of 2011	8/24-8/25 or 8/28-8/29 or 8/31-9/1	8/24-8/25 or 8/28-8/29	8/24-8/25 or 8/28-8/29	8/24-8/25
Room event	Convenient room for event approved - 100%	Room can't be used if approved - 100%	Possible to get same services as other 100% or 110%	110% - some government cases will be made available as well
Team	100% Disabled & PA, PC, etc.	100% Disabled & PA, PC, etc.	100%	100%
Comments	Not able to sign up in this time	Not able to sign up in this time	Not able to sign up in this time	Not able to sign up in this time
State Hotel Information	10 miles from airport	17 miles from airport - 10 min drive	1 mile from airport - 10 min drive	1 mile from airport - 10 min drive
Public transportation to and from airport?	Yes - 10 min drive to airport	Public transit available with advance reservation	Transportation - accessible with advance reservation	Accessible shuttle service provided by US Travel - private bus also for accessible vehicles
Carry for accessible from registration property?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Accessibility walking distance to hotel location?	Yes	Yes	Yes - easy access	Yes - easy access
Public walking distance?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other nearby activities	Disney, Sea World, Disney's 100+ miles	Disney, Sea World, Disney's 100+ miles	Disney, Sea World, Disney's 100+ miles	Disney, Sea World, Disney's 100+ miles
Cost of event?	Disney	Disney	Disney	Disney
Only able to host?	Yes - would be main group at the hotel	Yes - would be main group at the hotel	Yes - would be main group at the hotel	Yes - would be main group at the hotel
Special other facilities	Special	Special	Special	Special

Utilizing Local Resources

- ▶ Some agencies may offer free interpreter services; such as in NM the Rape Crisis Center of Central NM
- ▶ The ARC
- ▶ Centers for Independent Living
- ▶ ADA Coordinators (i.e. City, County, Hospital)
- ▶ Does your state have a Governor's Commission on Disability
- ▶ Your local Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs or Domestic Violence Programs

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