

Accessible Meetings FAQs

Developed by  ESPA
Event Services Professionals Association

Accessibility Toolkit for Venues & Destinations

ESPA has created “Project Access: Accessible Meetings FAQs,” a downloadable resource form that hotels, convention centers, CVBs and other destinations and venues can customize with their accessibility information and branding to provide to meeting planners.

The checklists are designed sequentially, from a guest’s arrival at a destination airport, to ground transportation, lodging, meeting venues and offsite venues. There is also a resource list that DMOs can customize to fill in state and local agencies. The toolkit was created with the input of ESPA members who work in convention and visitors bureaus, hotels and convention centers, along with contributions from meeting planners.

This is a living document and will evolve; it is not assumed to be all inclusive. ESPA welcomes input on other areas to be incorporated into the document. Parties should be aware of local laws which may impact accessibility requirements or restrictions.

The Accessibility FAQs editable version is readily available to all ESPA members on the members-only web site. Non-members can email info@espaonline.org to receive a copy.

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LODGING

- When was your hotel last updated to meet amended ADA standards?
- How many handicap-accessible rooms are on property?
- In what way are the rooms accessible?
- How many have roll-in showers?
- How many of the roll-in showers have built-in benches?
- Are all your meeting rooms accessible to someone using a mobility device or crutches?
- Are there any meeting rooms that are only accessible by stairs?
- Are your restaurants and outlets accessible to someone using a wheelchair or scooter?
- Is the buffet or serving line set low enough for someone in a wheelchair to reach all items?
- Does the front desk have a check-in area low enough for someone in a wheelchair to sign documents?
- Do you have any rooms for hearing or vision impaired guests?
- How are your staff trained to assist people with hearing, sight or mobility challenges?
- Do any of your staff know American Sign Language?
- Does your property own an Interprettype® communications device?
- Does your property use scented cleaning products?
- Does your property offer any rooms that have been cleaned with unscented products?
- Are there unscented guest room amenities (soap, shampoo, etc.) if requested?
- Does your property have AEDs available onsite? Is your staff trained to use them?

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- Does your hotel have an emergency "Epi-Pen" for anaphylaxis? When is the expiration date on it?
- How far is your closest hospital or walk-in clinic?
- Does the front desk check out assistive devices for the hearing or vision impaired, e.g., flashing alarms?
- In an emergency, how will staff assist a person with disabilities to exit the hotel safely without elevator use?
- Does your restaurant offer a Braille menu or staff to read the menu to guests?
- Are there tactile (Braille) room number signs and elevator signs?
- Has your Braille signage been tested and confirmed as accurate by someone who reads Braille?
- How do your food service providers address individual allergies? What do you need from the meeting planner?
- Is there an outdoor relief area for service dogs? Are litter bags provided?
- Does the hotel allow comfort animals (not required by law) and does staff know the difference between comfort and service dogs?

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AIRPORT/ GROUND TRANSPORTATION/ CAR RENTALS

- How do people using wheelchairs get from the airport to the hotels?
- Does your airport provide continuous skycap wheelchair service from the curbside, to airline counter, to gate?
- Is the area where transportation (public or private) can be accessed approachable without leaving the main terminal? If not, what options does someone in a wheel chair have to get to the transportation facility outside the terminal?
- Does the airport have courtesy trams inside the airport to move people between gates and concourses?
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- Do your rental car companies offer vans or other vehicles with chairlift or stowage?
- Are there "black car" or limo companies that can accommodate mobility devices?
- Are there Uber or Lyft car services that can accommodate wheelchair stowage?
- Is there an outdoor relief area for service dogs at the airport?
- Are airport shuttles equipped with wheelchair lifts?
- Does your city have taxis or vans that can carry wheelchairs or scooters?
- Can I rent a van that has a wheelchair lift?
- Does city bus service accommodate wheelchairs?
- Does city bus service accommodate electric scooters?
- Does city bus service have announcements of each stop? Digital display?
- How many wheelchairs can be accommodated by your charter shuttle coaches?
- Are service dogs allowed on city buses?
- Are service dogs allowed on charter coach shuttles?

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CONVENTION CENTER

- When was the convention center last updated to meet amended ADA standards?
- Does your convention center have a wheelchair and crutches on site in case of emergencies?
- Do you have ramps to allow someone access to the stage/speaker's platform?
- Is there extra cost to build a ramp to the stage?
- Can someone using a mobility device access all meeting rooms in the convention center, including via ramp or lift?
- Are any meeting rooms in the convention center accessible only by stairs?
- How many restroom stalls are usable by people in wheelchairs?
- Does your facility have an evacuation chair that provide an alternative solution to assist a person using a wheelchair down the stairs if the elevator is not functioning or a fire is in progress?
- Is there a First Aid station in the Convention Center? If so, is it well marked and easily accessible?
- Does the convention center offer assistive listening devices for a person who is deaf or hard of hearing?
- Are there tactile (Braille) signs on meeting rooms, public access areas, elevators, etc.?
- Have all Braille signs been reviewed and confirmed as accurate by someone who reads Braille?
- How do you train convention center staff to assist people with hearing, sight and mobility disabilities?
- Are your banquet servers trained to address food allergy issues including cross-contamination at buffet tables?
- How many of your staff know American Sign Language (ASL)?
- In an emergency, how will your staff evacuate people with disabilities without using elevators?
- Does your facility use scented or non-scented cleaning products?

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- How close is the nearest hospital or clinic?
- Are there AEDs installed in your building? Is all your staff trained to use them?

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TOURS AND OFFSITE VENUES

- Restaurants - Are menus available in Braille or large print?
- Restaurants - Do your servers offer to read the menu to people who are visually impaired?
- Restaurants - are buffets, cashier stands, other freestanding stations reachable by someone using mobility device?
- Tours - are staff or docents available to assist people with disabilities?
- Tours - is there a staff member trained in American Sign Language?
- Tours - If using a Tour Bus Company are vehicles handicapped accessible?
- Tours - Do all tour venues have ramps or handicapped access?
- Tours – All venues must allow service dogs. Can you confirm compliance?
- Museums - are there Braille or Large Print exhibit notes?
- Museums - are there headphones with commentary?
- Museums - Do you offer a regular tour with a guide using ASL?
- Museums - Are all areas of the exhibit accessible to people using mobility devices?
- Museums – Are your films captioned for people with hearing loss?
- Sport facilities – Do they have designated drop off zones close to the building; and seating for people using scooters, wheelchairs or crutches, along with seating for accompanying guests?

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LOCAL RESOURCES

- Hearing assistive devices-rental companies' complete contact information:
- Braille translation services-complete contact information:
- Sign language interpreters-how to contact and hire locally:
- Large print format materials—identify the font size required, and recommend printers.
- Closest drugstore to purchase hearing aid batteries:
- Do crosswalks at intersections have audible signals and/or vibrations?
- Veterinary contact information for service animals:
- Closest hospital or clinic to the meeting site:
- Contact for city or state agency for health, human services, human rights, disability ombudsman, or other support network:
- Are there rentals available for wheelchairs, scooters, crutches and walkers? Please provide complete contact information:
- How many electric scooters are available in your destination for week-long rentals?
- What is the average cost of scooter rentals per day or week?

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WEBSITE RESOURCES

<http://www.eugenecascadescoast.org/meeting-planners/accessible-meetings/>

<http://blog.empowermint.com/webinar-replay/meetings-inclusion-your-responsibility-to-provide-the-right-access-to-attendees-with-disabilities/>

<http://www.ada.gov/business/accessiblemtg.htm>

ADA & meetings on campus:

<http://ada.osu.edu/ADAVenues/venues.html>

Tips about service/comfort animals:

<http://www.ada.gov/qasrvc.htm>

Association on Higher Education and Disability

<https://www.ahead.org/>

Hospitality and lodging standards

<http://www.adahospitality.org>

1-800-949-4232 (ADA Center)

Etiquette

<http://www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/DisabilityEtiquette.pdf>

<https://longmoreinstitute.wordpress.com/2015/12/14/ten-access-blunders-that-the-nondisabled-make/>

Blog on food allergies, chemical sensitivities, safe dietary practices

<http://thrivemeetings.com/category/registration/>

Air Travelers with disabilities

<http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2012/06/05/air-travelers-with-disabilities-here-are-your-rights/>

Tips for planning accessible meetings

<http://ow.ly/4mX05u>

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