

Event Accessibility Best Practices

The [Accessible Meetings Events and Conferences Guide](#) is a great resource for planning and incorporating accessibility into your event. See below for key information from this and other resources to ensure an inclusive and accessible event experience.

List Venue-Specific Accommodations

Note the accommodations already available at the venue. Link to the accessibility page for venue-specific information so guests know what accessibility features are already available.

* This would be a great place to Market Huntington Convention Center as an accessible venue and link to your accessibility page. Consider adding key stats here about the size of your building and the number of accessibility features you offer.

Marketing & Registration

When marketing events include a statement asking for accommodations requests with a recommended deadline. Determine your deadline by consulting the list of accommodations and recommended lead times in the accommodations resources section (Page 2) and by contacting associated accommodations organizations to verify recommended deadlines.

Provide a list of available accommodations and requested deadlines as well as contact information for any accommodations that may be needed but are not listed. Be sure a phone number and email address are listed as a contact.

For events that require registration, build accommodations requests into the registration form.

Note that the event planning staff will do their best to accommodate any requests for accommodations after recommended deadlines. Do not require deadlines that are longer than necessary to be sure guests who need accommodations feel welcome.

When communicating about your event, be sure to use plain language. Plain language is accessible to the largest amount of people. Plain language uses short sentences, avoids jargon, and writes to a third grade reading level to ensure accessibility. [Hemingway Editor](#) is a resource you can use to check the accessibility of your messaging. Photos paired with instructions also help communicate your message.

Provide contact information for any questions about the event both leading up to the event and on the day of the event.

Event Set Up, Access and Inclusion

Keep your aisles and spaces around displays clear and as wide as possible. Allow at least 32 inches but preferably 36 inches of clearance.

Include signage and staff at key points to assist with wayfinding. Ensure signage is clear, uses high contrast and an easy-to-read font, and is written in plain language.

Note accessible features like elevators, accessible restrooms, and lactation rooms on maps and in instructions.

An ADA-compliant sales or service counter must have a portion that is 28 - 36 inches high, measured from the finish floor to the sales counter top. You may not have complete control over the height of your tables or counters. High counters (think food trucks) can make ordering difficult for wheelchair users. Your help can make a huge difference if you can come from behind the counter to give the person their purchase or carry their food purchase to a table. Low counters make it possible for everyone to talk to vendors and see what's available.

Make it easy to check in or pay. Clipboards, portable credit card readers, or those with an extended cable so that it can be handed to the customer at the counter make paperwork and payment easier. Come out from behind the counter or table to serve customers who may not be able to see over it.

Plan for accessible seating. Consult the “Meeting Room Layouts and Considerations” section of the [accessible conference guide](#).

[Consider sensory needs when planning events](#).

Sources and Resources:

<https://www.adainfo.org/hospitality/accessible-meetings-events-conferences-guide/>

<https://accessibility.cornell.edu/event-planning/accessible-meeting-and-event-checklist/>

<https://accessibility.usc.edu/accessibility-at-usc/event-accessibility/accessible-event-checklist/>

<https://paautism.org/resource/hosting-sensory-friendly-event/>

Accommodations Resources

Clovernook Braille Printing House

<https://clovernook.org/braille-printing-house/arts-and-accessibility-initiative/>

Samuel Foulkes at sfoulkes@clovernook.org or (513) 728-6243.

Captioning

Captions are words displayed on a television, computer, mobile device, or movie screen, providing the speech or sound portion of a program or video via text. Captions allow viewers to follow the dialogue and the action of a program simultaneously.

<https://www.hearingloss.org/hearing-help/technology/cartcaptioning/>

<https://eos.org/opinions/caption-this-best-practices-for-live-captioning-presentations>

Assistive Listening Devices – might fall more on venue

Types of Assisted Listening Systems

ADA Compliant

- Hearing loop
- Radio frequency (RF), Frequency Modulation (FM)
- Infrared (IR)
- Direct-wired equipment

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

<https://hearingloss.org/>

<https://www.hearingloss.org/hearing-help/technology/hat/hearing-loop-technology/>

Sign Language Interpreting

Locating Interpreters:

The first three bullets below are specific to the Cleveland Area

- Sign Language Interpreters of Cleveland 440-716-0203
- Bridges Interpreting (Amanda Ghramm) amanda@bridgesinterpret.com or 216-408-9659
- Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center 216-231-0787 or <https://www.chsc.org/american-sign-language-interpreting-services/interpreting-services-for-individuals/>
- Purple 330-869-4687 or <https://signlanguage.com/onsite-interpreting/akron-cleveland>
- Sorenson 800-659-4783 <https://www.scis.com/> (They have lots of local interpreters, but everything is routed through the 800 number because this is a national company)

Search for and connect directly with a Certified ASL Interpreter by searching the database maintained by our certifying organization, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf: www.rid.org. Select “Search Tools” from the very top of the page and then select “Search the Registry.” Use the same tool to search for other interpreter referral agencies.

Interpreting- Helpful Information and Best Practices:

- To verify the quality of interpreters, request interpreters that are nationally certified, either Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) or Board of Evaluators of Interpreters (BEI). Securing certified interpreters is best done well in advance of the event date as they are in high demand. If no nationally certified interpreters are available, the next best option is to request an interpreter that is familiar with the content to be presented. For example, if the conference is about improving mental health services, the interpreter should have experience working in mental health settings or working with the specific sub-population that is being addressed.
- Interpreters typically work in teams of 2 for presentations lasting 2 hours or more to ensure accurate interpreting. If there are multiple interpreters, they will take turns every 15 – 20 minutes to ensure accurate interpreting; the seated interpreter will monitor the active interpreter and provide support for any information that is missed.
- If multiple Deaf people are attending, work with the interpreter referral agency to determine how many interpreters are necessary. If there are multiple simultaneous breakout sessions or a Deaf attendee has specific communication needs, multiple interpreters might be needed.
- During event planning, it's important to consider placement of the interpreter and ensure adequate lighting on the interpreter. Often, the interpreter is located on stage next to the presenter or off to the side. If it's a low stage, the interpreter might stand on the floor in front of the stage.
- Sometimes it's more appropriate to seat the interpreter at a table with the Deaf attendee(s) – for example at an awards banquet, the interpreter might sit at the table but move to the stage during the awards ceremony.
- Consider the directionality of the audio system so that the interpreter can hear the speaker while standing beside them (talk to the audio-visual company to learn more about this as there are a lot of variables to consider).

Deadline recommendations: 1-2 weeks ahead of an event

- One week for 1-day events
- 2 weeks for multi-day events
- If it is likely that a person will request an interpreter, it is helpful to secure interpreting services well in advance. If a change is made where an interpreter will no longer be needed, a 2 week advance notice is best.