



P R E S E N T S

The Accessibility Playbook

DESTINATIONS
HOTELS • DINING
ATTRACTIONS

PRODUCED IN
CONJUNCTION WITH

TRAVELABILITY
FOUNDATION

Contents

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

PAGE 6

- Who benefits from accessibility?
- How to Communicate with and About People with Disabilities
- Autism: Mythbusting
- Mobility: Lived Experience
- ADA 101
- Website accessibility 101
- Tips for Developers
- Test your Accessibility IQ Quiz

BUILDING A BUSINESS CASE

PAGE 14

- Market Size-CDC Research USA
- Adult Travelers with Disability- Open Doors Takeaways
- 2021 and 2023 State of the American Traveler (Miles Partnership/Destination Analysis)
- Comparing 2023 with 2021 Research
- Signs that Accessibility in Travel has gone Mainstream
- How to Determine Economic Impact
- Economic Impact of Baby Boomers
- Why Hotels Should Invest in Accessibility

PROVIDING INFORMATION

PAGE 20

- Landing Pages: Where to start
- Accessible Websites vs Accessible Landing Page
- How to Get Started Making a Landing Page
- A Guide to Accessible Landing Page Creation
- Survey your industry
- Dialogue box
- Making Videos Accessible

EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE: LANDING PAGES

PAGE 28

- State
- County
- CVB
- Hotel
- Attraction
- How to Promote your landing page

HELPFUL TIPS TO BECOME ACCESSIBILITY FRIENDLY

PAGE 30

- General Information
- Marketing
- Wayfinding
- Customer Service
- Dining
- Tips for Attractions and Hotels

E-LEARNING VIDEOS FOR HOTEL EMPLOYEES PAGE 36

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR HOTELS PAGE 38

- Why Hotels Should Invest in Accessibility
- Easy low cost/no cost fixes for Common Accessibility problems
- AD Hoc Accessible Hotel Toolkit

ACCESSIBLE MEETINGS PAGE 44

- TravelAbility's Guide to Making a Meeting Accessible
- DMO Perspective: Welcoming Accessible Meetings
- Assessing Your Convention Center Video Series
- Additional Resources

ACCESSIBLE OUTDOORS PAGE 52

- What Makes A Better Park
- On The Trail
- Glossary & Resources
- The Economic Impact of Building Accessible Trails

ASSISTIVE INNOVATIONS FROM THE PITCHFEST PAGE 58

RESOURCES PAGE 62

- TravelAbility Trusted: Consulting & Assessment Services
- Influential Disability Travel Bloggers
- Cheat Sheets on Promoting Accessibility for States and Destinations

©2023 Travelability. All rights reserved. Sharing or reproduction of any kind without the expressed written consent of Travelability is prohibited.

TRAVELABILITY FOUNDATION



We have partnered with TravelAbility, an organization whose purpose is to make travel for people with disabilities easier by educating the travel industry on how to become more accessible for all travellers. Our partnership includes access to The Accessibility Playbook, through which we can educate our destination partners on how they can be more inclusive for visitors (as well as residents) with disabilities. By becoming accessible for people who are disabled today, we are actually preparing for the surge of baby boomers, 40% of whom self-identify as having a disability after

they turn 65; control 58% of all discretionary spending; have an average net worth of \$1.1 mn and have the time to travel. This Playbook includes business cases, best practices, instructional videos, and innovations that you can share with your team and stakeholders. All Means All!

TRAVELABILITY FOUNDATION PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

- > [TRAVELABILITY INSIDER](#), is a monthly newsletter with 3300 subscribers within the travel industry. The newsletter aggregates content to raise awareness within the travel industry about the difficulties disabled travelers face, best practices for their destinations, solutions for disabled travelers and to motivate them to make accessibility a priority.
- > [TRAVELABILITY FOR HOSPITALITY](#), is a quarterly newsletter directed to the hotel and lodging industry. The newsletter aggregates content about best practices in the hospitality industry to educate hoteliers and motivate them to be welcoming and inclusive for all guests.
- > [DESTINATIONS WITH ACCESSIBILITY](#), is a micro-site that aggregates accessibility content for over 175 destinations in the US, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. The site makes it easier for travelers with a disability to access accessibility information about destinations while planning their travels
- > **THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAYBOOK** is a 62-page resource guide containing videos, slide decks, technology, products, tips and use case scenarios designed to help any travel organization/ company advance their accessibility and educate their stakeholders. The Accessibility Playbook is complimentary for donors who contribute more than \$10,000 in a calendar year.
- > [THE DESTINATION A11Y CLUB](#) is a group of Destination Marketing Organizations committed to advancing accessibility together by sharing information and resources. The Destination A11Y Club is one of the major fundraising vehicles for the Foundation. Club members receive a copy of the The Accessibility Playbook and participate in group promotions designed by the Foundation to create awareness about accessibility and inspire change in their stakeholders.
- > [INNOVATEABLE](#) is an annual showcase of adaptive innovations, technologies, services and amenities that can be introduced through the travel channel.

- > **TRAVELABILITY TRUSTED** is a collection of service providers, consultants, technologies, apps and innovations that help make travel easier for people with disabilities. These companies and organizations have been vetted by TravelAbility
- > [TRAVELABILITY YOUTUBE](#) archives contain over 100 videos and presentations that are available to the interested parties to learn about Best Practices in accessible travel, DE&I, the lived experience of travelers with a disability and practical advice and information on how to more inclusive and welcoming to travelers with a disability. The videos have been generously donated to the Foundation by the Emerging Markets Summit.
- > **TRAVELABILITY FELLOWS** Program in partnership with the UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management is a hands on learning experience for hospitality students. Students work with destination management organizations to research and promote their accessibility initiatives.
- > **TRAVELABILITY: FILLING THE ACCESSIBILITY GAP IN HOSPITALITY** (in partnership with the UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management) is a self-paced learning module designed to train the next generation of hospitality industry executives about all aspects of the accessible travel industry.
- > [ACCESSIBLE JOURNEYS MAGAZINE](#) in partnership with Melange Publishing is a quarterly digital magazine directed towards consumers. A portion of the advertising revenues from the magazine are an important funding source for the Foundation.

WHO BENEFITS FROM ACCESSIBILITY?

- People with disabilities, including permanent, temporary, visible or invisible
- Families with young children
- Elderly people
- Travelers with luggage
- Shoppers with heavy bags
- Delivery people
- Very small or very large people
- Pregnant women

Source: Destination British Columbia

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH AND TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Part of what makes communicating about disabilities ambiguous is that people with disabilities are not a homogenous group. A good practice is to ask how someone prefers to describe themselves and, if you inadvertently offend someone with your language, apologize and ask them to share with you their preferred language. There are generally two ways to approach this: person-first or identity-first. Neither is right or wrong; we should simply honor an individual's preference.

Person-first language: Person-first language emphasizes the person first — their individuality, their complexity, their humanness and their equality.

Example: Use “a person with epilepsy” instead of “an epileptic” and “people with disabilities” instead of “the disabled”.

Identity-first language: Identity-first language emphasizes that the disability plays a role in who the person is and reinforces disability as a positive cultural identifier.

Example: Use “disabled person” instead of “person with disabilities” and “autistic person” instead of “a person with autism.”

Note: Some believe that person-first language is based around the idea that disabilities are somehow insulting or problematic, and that separating those characteristics from themselves compounds those negative connotations, whereas identity-first language celebrates their disabled identity [See the CDC factsheet](#).

TIPS TO COMMUNICATE TO AND ABOUT INDIVIDUALS WITH A DISABILITY

TIPS	USE	DO NOT USE
Emphasize abilities, not limitations	Person who uses a wheelchair	Confined or restricted to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound
	Person who uses a device to speak	Can't talk, mute
Do not use language that suggests the lack of something	Person with a disability	Disabled, handicapped
	Person of short stature	Midget
	Person with cerebral palsy	Cerebral palsy victim
	Person with epilepsy or seizure disorder	Epileptic
	Person with multiple sclerosis	Afflicted by multiple sclerosis
Emphasize the need for accessibility, not the disability	Accessible parking or bathroom	Handicapped parking or bathroom
Do not use offensive language	Person with a physical disability	Crippled, lame, deformed, invalid, spastic
	Person with an intellectual, cognitive, developmental disability	Slow, simple, moronic, defective, afflicted, special person
	Person with an emotional or behavioral disability, a mental health impairment, or a psychiatric disability	Insane, crazy, psycho, maniac, nuts
Avoid language that implies negative stereotypes	Person without a disability	Normal person, healthy person
Do not portray people with disabilities as inspirational only because of their disability	Person who is successful, productive	

Source: Center for Disease Control (CDC)

EIGHT MYTHS ABOUT AUTISM THAT REALLY NEED TO GO AWAY...

Many people think they know about autism, but their information is either hopelessly outdated or informed by very limited representation in the media.

Here are 8 myths and stereotypes about autism and autistic people, and why they're nonsense. (Note - some of these myths are more widespread than others, and obviously there is nuance behind each one of these)

1. Autistic people don't feel empathy.

Simply untrue. Though some may not, it seems the majority of us feel enormous amounts of empathy, even for non-living things, and especially for animals.

2. Autistic people can't make eye contact.

We can. Some of us don't seem to mind it at all, whilst the many of us who hate it can force ourselves to when we feel its necessary, especially adults who have learned this the hard way.

3. Autistic males are far more common than autistic females.

Increasingly untrue. The ratio is rapidly shifting to being more balanced as diagnostic understanding improves. I wouldn't be surprised to see a ratio of 1:1 eventually, and a huge amount of content online is created by autistic women and girls.

4. Autistic people don't have a sense of humor.

I mean, some of us don't, and some of us have what may be seen as a 'different' sense of humor, but there are a lot of funny autistic people out there, including those who do comedy professionally.

5. Autistic people have learning disabilities.

In fact a surprisingly low percentage of autistic people have co-occurring learning disabilities. However, people with learning disabilities are much more likely to be autistic too, which might be why this idea exists.

6. Autistic people are all antisocial.

Not true. Many of us may be asocial from trauma associated with social interaction, but it seems many of us are quite gregarious and even extroverted. Admittedly there are some of us, like me, who are much happier in solitude, but this doesn't appear to be the norm - and even then, I wonder if that's a trauma response.

'A wonderful, compassionate, important book'
JOANNE HARRIS

HOW
THE WORLD
ISN'T BUILT FOR
AUTISTIC PEOPLE
AND WHAT WE
SHOULD ALL
DO ABOUT IT

UN-
TYPICAL

PETE WHARMBY

Special Thanks to Pete Wharmby, Autistic Best Selling Author

7. Autistic people are all STEM subject specialists.

Nope. Though plenty are, there are many of us who have skills, jobs and qualifications in the humanities, arts and other fields.

8. Autistic people are all super-gifted in some way.

Absolutely not. Though some of us might be skilled in certain areas (often as a result of our monotropic focus on topics we become expert in), and some of us might have excellent memories or be hyperlexic, plenty of us are perfectly average, thanks, and don't appreciate the assumption we have superhuman abilities...

MOBILITY: LIVED EXPERIENCE

Five Signs an Accessible Space Was Designed With No Lived Experience

Most people naturally assume that ADA compliance means accessible for all. I know I certainly did before I was a wheelchair user. Four years ago, I thought I understood the needs of a wheelchair traveler. I had talked to many wheelchair users, and family members of wheelchair users. I listened. I researched. Then I took my first trip as a wheelchair user, and my mind was BLOWN.



So, here are some signs that a hotel room was designed by maybe somebody well-meaning, but, like me, inexperienced.

- 1) The bathroom mirror only shows my forehead.
- 2) The thermostat is set at shoulder height for somebody standing. I may be able to physically reach it, but I certainly can't see the temperature it's set to.
- 3) The shower controls are on the opposite end of the shower in relation to the shower bench. They have complied with the law, and they have two grab bars and a built in bench, but didn't sit on the bench to make sure that I can turn on the shower or reach wall-mounted soaps.
- 4) There is a sitting area placed in front of the windows, blocking my ability to open and close the curtains. While it's beautiful, and a delightful place to sit, it doesn't work for a wheelchair user. How do I close my curtains at night, or open them in the morning?
- 5) The beds are too high. As pretty as high beds look, they are not practical for a wheelchair user.

Also not practical: beds with bulky frames that prevent the wheelchair from getting super close, or beds on box frames that do not allow for a lift to be rolled under.

What do you think? What else have you noticed ?

Kenneth Edmonds Media Creator at Traveling With A Chair:

Housekeeping leaves the handheld shower at the full up position. Door too stiff to open easily. Furniture blocking access to bed or window.

David McCue, Experienced Safety Manager:

Just a few more to consider

1. Thick plush carpets which are hard to wheel through
2. Change of floor height at entry to bathroom - looks ok at first sight but some have wedges that are too much of an angle
3. Too much furniture in the room
4. Hose on hand shower not long enough
5. Toilets that are too high
6. Shower seats in bathrooms that have your back to the wall and No protection to stop you falling forward

Mellissa Sumner, Depoe Bay Chamber Director, Planning Commissioner, Festival Director:

Bathroom vanity is either solid and too tall or doesn't have a spot for a chair so you can reach the sink

Special Thanks to Kristi Durso, TravelAbility Ambassador who posted this article on Linked In

ADA REQUIREMENTS FOR TRAVEL ORGANIZATIONS

For Hotels and Lodging Facilities

Below is a link to an overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that addresses hotels and lodging. Wheelchairtravel.org has taken difficult to decipher government descriptions for ADA regulations and re-packaged them in this easy-to-read document [here](#).

A Beginner's Guide to ADA Compliant Websites. Search Engine Journal provides an overview of what you need to know about website compliance, which you can find by clicking [this link](#).

W.A.V.E. is developed and made available as a free community service by WebAIM at Utah State University. Originally launched in 2001, WAVE has been used to evaluate the accessibility of millions of web pages.

WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY 101

Making your website accessible so people with disabilities can use the features is essential for any business. The CDC estimates 15 percent of the population has some form of disability and, under the eyes of the law, the website is now considered the physical locations.

A. Design: Website Compliance Checklist

1. **Screen-reader Compatible Web Pages.** Web pages must be readable by electronic “screen readers” — which are devices commonly used by the visually impaired to surf the internet.
2. **Alt-tagged Images.** Images must have “alt tags” (a type of metadata) which will help visually-impaired users to identify the image via text or via a screen reader. Search engine optimizers will know of alt-tags as a way to optimize images for ranking high in ‘Google Images’.

Helpful Tips: Are you making these five mistakes when writing alt text? [Learn More](#)
3. **Alt-tagged Tables.** If you’re using tables on any web pages, they must also have alt-tags— similar to those used with images — to help explain each column via text. The user’s screen-reader will then read that text aloud, describing the contents of the table.
4. **Automatic Scripting.** Any scripted display usage of image mapping should be accompanied by textual alternatives.
5. **Style Sheet Independence.** Your web pages shouldn’t need a stylesheet to display in a way that is understandable. They should be readable to screen readers, most of which cannot load style sheets.
6. **Accessible Forms.** Web forms should be usable even without a mouse, and each field should be labeled.
7. **Text Links to Plugins.** If your website requires a specific plugin to work correctly, you should present the link to that plugin in text form.
8. **Inclusive Color Schemes.** Your website should not contain any colors or color combinations that are either integral to the correct usage of your website, or which may confuse those with color blindness in any way pertaining to your website, products or services.
9. **Keyboard-friendly Browsing.** Your website shouldn’t be reliant on the usage of a mouse or touchpad. Users who wish to navigate using only keyboard keys should be able to do so.
10. **Harmless Website Design.** Your website should not serve images or videos that can cause seizures.

More Tips on Accessible Web Design for Developers



Accessibility Checklist

Overview of considerations, not comprehensive



Audio and Video

Captions, transcripts, controls, avoiding auto-play



Color

Contrast, colorblindness, light and dark mode standards



Plain language, symbols and forms

Clear and inclusive writing, navigating special characters



Semantic HTML and ARIA

Heading order, tables, labels and screen reader support



Alt text

Describing images for blind and low-vision users



Automated testing tools

Useful for catching some (but not all) issues



Keyboard accessibility

Ensuring content is navigable without a mouse



Screen readers

How to use them and why you need to do so



Text size, fonts and zoom settings

Choosing fonts and ensuring they are responsive

[Learn more](#) about accessible web design.

Take the Accessibility Etiquette Quiz

Western University in Canada published a short disability etiquette quiz to help nondisabled people learn to “respectfully interact with people with disabilities.” The quiz is a great conversation starter and an opportunity for teams to learn more about the disability community. [Take the quiz](#).

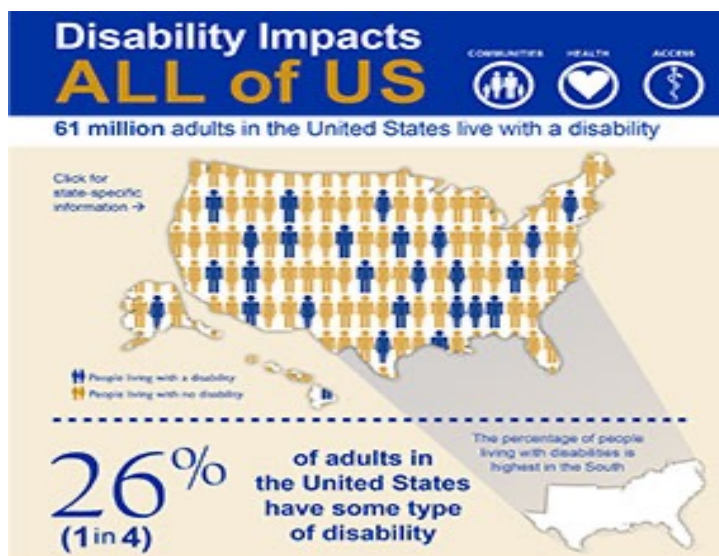
BUILDING A BUSINESS CASE
BIG, SOFT HEART
MEETS
COLD, HARD CASH



MARKET SIZE AND POTENTIAL

Overview of the Disability Travel Market in America.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), 26% of adults living in America are living with some type of disability. (See infographic below). The 61 million Americans living with a disability represent the largest underserved minority in America.



Research:

Open Doors Organization: 2020 Market Study: Travel and Spending Patterns of American Adults with a Disability. Open Doors Organization released their 4th annual nationwide study on the travel patterns and spending of American adults with disabilities. Conducted by The Harris Poll in June/July 2020, it focuses on 2018-19 when travel was still booming. During that 2-year period, 27 million travelers with a disability took a total of 81 million trips and spent \$58.7 billion on just their own travel, up from \$34.6 billion in the prior 2015 Study. Spending on air travel also increased to \$11 billion, up from \$9 billion in 2015. As in prior years, the 2020 Market Study provides details on Internet and mobile technology use and includes sections on travel destinations, air travel, cruise travel accommodations. New this year are questions on preferred activities at the destination and travel plans post-pandemic.

See instructions on how to order the 2020 ODO Market Study as well as purchase the 2015, 2005 and 2002 Reports. [Click here.](#)

10 key findings from the 2020 ODO Market Study that can help build a business case for accessible travel

1. 70% of have taken at least at least one trip — (37% outside US—28% in 2015)
2. 84% Stayed in paid accommodations (hotels/home rentals (76% in 2015)
3. 55%: took at least one trip by air. (43% in 2015)
4. Travel spend: \$57 billion on their own travel (\$34bn in 2015)
5. Travel with companion: 69% Average party size: 2.9
6. Travel with organized group 5% (2% in 2015)
7. Rented a car or van: 40% (26% in 2015)
8. Post Covid: 91% plan to travel once restrictions are lifted; 10% will travel
9. Requests for wheelchair assistance at U.S. airports has increased 17% YoY since 2015
10. U.S. Regions traveled in past 5 years: West: 45%, Midwest: 20%, East: 32%, South: 57%.



[Watch the Full Presentation](#) from TravelAbility
Tampa 8/30/2021

Our Takeaways:

- The center of the disabled traveler audience is a senior citizen who is 62 years old (47% are retired and 57% have aged into a mild or moderately severe disability.)
- Compared to the 2015 report, disabled travelers traveled more frequently and spent 68% more than the earlier study and 2017 was a breakthrough year for air travel as request for wheelchair assistance skyrocketed 30% from 2016-2017
- The most popular region for travel has been the South, where 57% of survey respondents traveled during the past five years.

The complete 78-page report may be purchased from [Open Doors Organization](#) for \$560.



Key Facts about Baby Boomers:

1. Baby Boomers 75 million
2. 49% are 65 and older
3. By 2030 60 million
4. Wealthiest : control 64.7 trillion—57% of US wealth. 40% of GDP from baby boomers
5. Control 75% of US companies.
6. 38.6% of Baby Boomers take vacations with their grandchildren

[Travel Into Aging](#) a comprehensive video about Baby Boomer travel from the Research Department at AARP.

2021 State of the American Traveler with Disabilities: Commissioned specifically for the TravelAbility Summit, this is the very latest research on the attitudes and needs of US travelers with disabilities. This custom research was conducted in early August 2021 by Destination Analysts and Miles Partnership as part of Destination Analysts' ongoing COVID-19 travel insights research. The research shares the latest insights on the U.S. travel market, the impact of the new Delta variant of COVID-19 and the opportunities for destinations and tourism businesses to engage with, support and convert travelers with disabilities.

- [View the presentation slides](#) (with our research partners, [Miles Partnership](#) and [Destination Analysts](#), August 2021.) or [Watch the Full Presentation](#) from TravelAbilityTampa August 2021

Conducted during August 2021. Available at www.milespartnership.com/travelability

2023 The State of the American Travelers with Disabilities: An updated study by Miles Partnership presented at the Emerging Markets Summit August 2023.



[See the full presentation](#)

Comparison with 2021 Research

2021

- Fielded July 2021
- First post-COVID summer, emphasis on service, safety
- Screening: Traveled with a person who has a disability in the past 2 years
- No specific questions for the travelers with disabilities segment
- How were they traveling and what planning resources were they using

2023

- Fielded July 2023
- Inflation increasing, revenge travel at an end
- Screening: Faced challenges traveling due to a physical, mental or emotional issue
- Three specific questions to the travelers with disabilities segment
- What challenges are they facing and what planning resources were they using

Signs that Accessibility is a Trend that has Gone Mainstream

At Travelability we find that accessibility is often a “nice to have” but not a “must have.” But in between “nice to have” and “must have” is “cool to have.” When prominent consumer brands announce their entry into the world of accessibility, it generates a great deal of positive P.R. and internal pride among employees and management. Here are 10 examples.

1. Nike is leading the sneaker marathon with [Fly Ease](#), a hands-free adaptive shoe
2. Unilever comes up smelling roses with [Degree Inclusive](#)-world’s first adaptive deodorant
3. Tommy Hilfiger snaps to attention with [Tommy Hilfiger Adaptive](#)
4. Uggs warms our footsies with [Uggs Universal](#) inclusive booties
5. Target hits the mark with [sensory friendly clothing](#)
6. Walmart introduces the [Adaptive Clothing Showroom](#)
7. Starbucks uses Aira to assist blind [customers with their morning coffee habit](#)
8. Abilitees Adaptivewear features an [insulin pump belt](#) in hot pink
9. SlickChicksOnline shocks the uptight with [adaptive intimate wear](#)
10. Amazon Prime included “Movies and TV about People with Disabilities” as one of their filters during December 2021.

Academy Nominates Two Disability-themed for Awards in 2021

For the first time ever, two disability themed full length motion pictures--“[Crip Camp](#)” and “[Sound of Metal](#)” were among the 10 Oscar nominees this year. And Crip Camp- is now being produced as Broadway musical.

A Google search for disability modeling/talent agencies turns up [these seven results](#)

Determine Economic Impact of Today’s Disabled Travelers

DO THE MATH: HYPOTHETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

- a. Target Population market in surrounding states: 14 mn
- b. Adult population in target market: 10 mn
- c. Percentage of population who identify as having a disability: 26%* (CDC 2019 report)
- d. Percentage of people with disabilities who have made at least one trip: 70% (Open Doors/Harris Market Study 2020)
- e. Per traveler in-destination spend: \$353.00 (Open Doors Market Study)

1. **Determine Target Population:** 10 mn (target audience) X 26% (identify as having a disability)=2.6million (total target audience)

2. **Determine potential disabled base :** 2.6 million X .70% =1.82 mn

3. **Economic impact:** 1.82 mn X \$353 = \$640,000,000

(Source: 2020 American Adults with Disabilities: Travel and Hospitality. Open Doors/Harris Poll Survey)

Economic Impact of Tomorrow's Disabled Travelers: Baby Boomer 65+

FACTS:

Baby Boomers: 71 million

- They control 56% of all discretionary spending
- 40% self-identify as having a disability after they turn 65
- 90% travel at least once a year
- 80% retired
- 63% travel during shoulder of off-season

Today: 12.5mn disabled travelers

Tomorrow: (over the next 8 years):
30.9 million travelers with a disability

Source: AARP Travel Study 2020, Health Today

TODAY'S DISABILITY TRAVELER: 2020

- 15.2% of disabled Americans travel :12.8 mn
- Average age: 63
- Average party size: 2.9 people

TOMORROW'S DISABLED TRAVELER

\$1.1 million
(average US net worth)

\$13 trillion
inheritance *(globally)*

80% are retired
63% travel during shoulder or offseason

77 MILLION
BABY BOOMERS

Source: AARP

The Bottom Line

- IF YOU'RE INCLUSIVE FOR TODAY'S **12.7 MN** DISABLED TRAVELERS YOU'LL BE INCLUSIVE FOR THE **77 MN** BABY BOOMERS, **30.9 MN** OF WHICH WILL AGE INTO A DISABILITY ONCE THEY HAVE TURNED 65

Why Hotels Should Invest in Accessibility

Should Hotel Executives Embrace Inclusivity for Disabled Travelers?



[See the Full Presentation](#)

PROVIDING INFORMATION



While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides a baseline of physical infrastructure, there is no ADA for information. This section includes tips and examples of accessible landing pages with information that will result in more accurate expectations and fewer complaints from guests while serving as a reference resource that will help internal team members answer questions

WHERE TO START

Why have an accessible landing page?

If travel companies are accessible for people who are disabled today, they will be prepared for tomorrow’s baby boomers, 40% of whom, according to *Health Today*, will be aging into a disability after they turn 65. “My baby boomer and senior clients won’t even consider any destination or supplier that doesn’t have accessibility information on their website.” Kristy Durso, CEO Incredible Memories Travel

Important baby boomer stats:

- They control 58% of discretionary spending in the U.S.
- Average net worth: \$1.1 million
- They stand to inherit \$13 trillion from their parents worldwide
- 78% are retired
- 90% plan to take at least one trip per year.
- 63% vacation during shoulder/lower season
- Explosive Growth: due to baby boomers adults w/disabilities will grow from 12.5mn to 36million over the next 8 years.
- Explosive growth of accessibility due to aging demographics as well as media and consumer products

LANDING PAGES

ACCESSIBLE LANDING PAGE vs ACCESSIBLE WEBSITE:

What’s the Difference?

Accessible Landing Page	Accessible Website
Purpose: Aggregates links to accessible content for more accurate expectations	Renders website technically for people w/ disabilities
Purpose: Visitors and residents can find all accessible DMO, Hotel or attraction features on DMO’s, in one place.	Make your website useable for people w/ disabilities.
Provided by: Gathering all links one place.	Technology providers

How to Get Started Making an Accessible Landing Page

Where to find accessible experiences and information to include (benchmarking and research):

- Google “accessible things to do in _____” for articles about accessibility
 - Survey your stakeholders (see sample questionnaire below)
 - Partner with local disability organizations
 - Museums and major attractions frequented by locals (most zoos and local cultural organizations have an ADA coordinator)
 - City managers for accessible hiking trails
 - Major attraction chains (i.e. ifly indoor skydiving, Madame Tussaud’s, etc.)
 - Accessible transportation from airport/train stations
 - Wheelchair and medical equipment rentals
5. **Links:** Link directly to the accessibility page url of accessible landing page attraction, hotel, restaurant, museum
 6. **Research:** Employ local college students to help research accessible features
 7. **Transportation:** Include accessible transportation links (i.e. airport transportation, buses, trains, local taxi companies, car rental companies)
 8. **Special Equipment Rental:** Include links to medical device /wheelchair rentals
 9. **ADD HOTELS with POOL LIFTS** as a way to differentiate them from other properties

A Guide to Accessible Landing Page Creation



**Free-To-Use
Universal
Accessibility Icons
(and where to use them)**



Universal (most common)



Depicting information for the following disabilities



Depicting your website is technically accessible (usually provided by vendor)

Where Should I Place Accessibility Link?

Best for users: on homepage. Users with disabilities are conditioned to click when they see this.

Second best: “Accessibility” on top navigation bar

Third best: “Accessibility” on “Trip Planning” Drop down

Fourth Best: “Accessibility” on footer.

Basic/Level One

STATEMENT

_____ is pleased to announce that we welcome visitors of all abilities. The content on this page features a multitude of accessible attractions, museums, recreational activities, points of interest as well hotels to help people with disabilities, as well as local residents who may have a disability, to discover what they can do in our city.

Things to Do

Attractions, experiences and Points of Interest. Direct links to the accessibility pages for museums, attractions and points of interest (historical locations, etc)

If You'd Like to Feature Hotels/Lodging

Identify hotel/lodging facilities (all major corporate hotel chains are compliant with ADA requirements (though there are some exceptions). You might identify hotels with pool lifts or some that go beyond ADA requirements.

Note: Send survey to your hotels with these questions. Those responding will be the only ones featured on the landing page.

Hotel Partner	Stepless entry	Pool lift	Total # Rooms	Total ADA Rooms	#ADA Rooms w/Roll-in shower
Hotel A (link)	•	•	265	9	3

NOTE: If you're a [Wheel the World](#) partner, link directly to the booking page on their website.

Transportation

Links to accessibility pages that you can find for the following

- Airport accessibility page
- Accessible public transportation
- Accessible airport services
- Accessible taxis & Van service
- Accessible car rentals

Medical Supplies and Services

- Wheelchair/Scooter rentals
- Medical equipment rentals (i.e. Hoyer lifts, shower chairs, etc)

Articles and media: (insert links to any articles that have been written by bloggers or influencers)

Level 2 Intermediate

Recreation:

- Accessibility links to State parks and hiking trails (info from City Manager's office)
- Accessibility links to points of interest
- Botanical gardens
- Zoos

Sports Venues

Links to accessibility page for college or professional arenas, stadiums, racetracks

Performance Venues:

- Symphony/ballet/ opera /theatre
- Prominent night clubs

Dining and Food:

- Most major restaurant chains are ADA compliant as well as coffee chains such as Starbucks.

Level 3 Advanced

Video Testimonials from visitors with different disabilities.

Following a survey to all your industry partners to uncover accessibility features, build a drop-down menu.

Build a Drop-Down Menu so users can click on the following.

- Mobility
- Blindness/Low Vision
- Deafness/Hard of hearing
- Autism/Neurodiversity

"Tag" each of the links to accessibility by the disability features that they have. (Those with features serving multiple disabilities will appear in searches for each disability).

https://build.washingtonpost.com/resources/accessibility?itid=lk_inline_manual_2

Survey Your Industry

The 20 Questions Accessibility Report Form

General:

1. Do you have a dedicated and detailed accessibility page on your website?
2. Are people with disabilities included in your marketing materials?
3. Does your website meet web accessibility standards?

For attractions and tour experiences:

4. Do you have quieter times that people with disabilities may visit?

5. Do you have multiple ways to purchase tickets?
6. Do you fast-track visitors who are unable to stand in a queue for long periods of time?
7. Do you have relief areas for service animals?

For Hotels:

8. Do your accessible bathrooms have roll in showers?
9. Does your accessible room offer handheld shower heads lever taps?
10. Does your accessible bathroom have toilet and shower grab bars?
11. Do you offer multiple options for booking (i.e. web, text, phone)?
12. Are staff on hand to help with luggage if needed?
13. Are your staff aware of transportation companies that are disability friendly?
14. Are your light switches, electrical outlets accessible for people in wheelchairs using one hand?
15. Do you have a list of local accessible restaurants?
16. Are your staff trained on guest evacuation requirements in case of emergency?
17. Do you offer vibrating alarm clocks w/ flashing lights on loan?

Dining:

18. Are your food menus available in large print versions?
19. Does your restaurant offer “quiet spaces” for guests who are hearing impaired or have cognitive disabilities?
20. Do you offer reading glasses, flashlight or magnifying glass if needed?

Add This Link to Your Website to Promote More Accurate Expectations

LINK: [Contact us about this page](#)

DIALOGUE BOX

Help Us Improve this Page

Something's not right.

If you find something that should be included or something that is please let us know.

Something needs fixing

Something needs to be added

Please describe it here (300 characters max):

Type here...

SUBMIT

Thank you for helping us improve!

MAKING VIDEOS ACCESSIBLE

Captioning Your Videos

Adding captions to your videos is only half the equation for accessible captions. The other half is quality. Quality captions matter. The best captions are boring. They let the video be the star.

Here's a checklist to ensure your captions are good. You can use this to help you find a qualified captioning vendor. They don't always know the best practices.

First, 100% of caption users will never agree on best practices. Hence, these best practices work for the majority.

For example, a conference used white text. But an attendee said yellow was a better experience. It can be for a few people, but yellow is also disliked by far more. Off-white has the greatest amount of support. (Pure white can be too bright for some.)

I originally created these 10 guidelines based on my experience and knowledge of accessibility. Then, I tweaked them after interviewing users, finding DCMP Captioning Key, and conducting surveys.

It can be a lot to read and apply guidelines. I developed the Caption 10 Guidelines to make it easy to check the quality of captions. If you do these things, your captions will most likely be accessible.

1. Captions are readable: Off-black background, off-white text, plain sans-serif font, and Goldilocks font size (neither too big nor too small). If you use closed captions, you're golden!

2. Captions are accurate including spelling and punctuation. Avoid bleeping bad words heard unless the sound is actually [bleep].

3. Captions are in sync with the audio.

4. Captions are the right length. One to two lines at no more than 32 characters each. Breaking points matter too. [Described and Captioned Media Program](#) Captioning Key has an excellent guide on this.

For the love of all things ... don't do one or two words at a time so fast.

5. Position captions on the bottom unless No. 7 applies. Then you can move them to the top temporarily to show text on the bottom.

6. Caption **relevant sounds including music and song lyrics.** Doorbell chimes, phone rings, dogs barking.

7. Captions don't hide credits or on-screen text. Viewers want to see both.

8. Caption voice changes. If a voice changes, it changes for a reason. This could be accents, making a voice higher or lower, becoming hoarse, or imitating something or someone else.

9. Identify the speaker. If it's not obvious who is speaking, put the name in brackets [Meryl] or use dashes like this:

- Speaker 1
- Speaker 2

10. Use pop-in motion rather than moving captions that roll up like in live events.

Bonus: Use closed captions not open to give viewers choices. (Not always possible.)

If you want to make a change in honor of Global Accessibility Awareness Day, please add captions to your video production process. Just like editing is part of the writing process, captioning is part of the video creation process.

Add #Captioned when you post your captioned video!

Special Thanks to Meryl Evans, CPACC , Writer Speaker and Accessibility Marketing Consultant

BEST PRACTICES AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Blind and visually impaired users

Users who have some vision impairments need audio descriptions to fully understand the content of the video if it lacks descriptive narration.

Everyone

Audio descriptions can be almost like listening to an audiobook. They allow users to understand the video if they look away for extended periods of time. Imagine cooking dinner while “listening” to your favorite TV show

Planning

- Plan your video so that the narration fully describes the video content. A well-planned narration can remove the need for a separate audio description.
- Allow space and timing for audio descriptions in the video. This helps prevent the need for pausing during the description.
- Describe all meaningful visual elements between the audio description and narration.

Writing audio description

- Keep the descriptions clear and concise
- Use accurate and descriptive language
- Refrain from offensive words
- Avoid jargon and technical terms
- Avoid opinions and interpretations
- Ensure users know the difference between what is real versus illusions, dreams, or other visually obvious scenarios

Special Thanks to the [Digital Accessibility Office](#), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

EXAMPLES OF LANDING PAGE EXCELLENCE





STATE: New York: NY Surveyed their DMO's, hired a consultant who spot checked accessibility features and developed a formula for economic impact based on targeted tourism markets and local. [Visit the site.](#)



CITY: Tampa Bay Visit Tampa's landing page is a prime model of superior quality in terms of content and design. It aggregates details about disability-friendly hotels, no-before-you-go Threshold 360 videos of key attractions, and accessible transportation options. Additionally, it features personal narratives from visitors and locals with diverse disabilities. [Visit the site.](#)



PROVINCE: Destination British Columbia. Converted their accessible itineraries that became tourism product that can be packaged for groups or individuals. [Visit the site.](#)



COUNTY: The Palm Beaches: Curated the best accessible features from the county's 39 cities Palm Beach County [Visit the site](#)



HOTEL: The Argonaut Hotel, San Francisco: Located in Fisherman's Wharf, the hotel has a dedicated page for Accessible rooms including bed height measurements. The hotel will host the 2024 Emerging Markets Summit in October. [Visit the site](#)



ATTRACTION: The Ringling Museum: Includes an abundance of accessibility features all organized beautifully. <https://www.ringling.org/accessibility>

Other resources to Include on your landing pages:

- Accessible transportation.
- Medical device/wheelchair/scooter rentals
- Converting accessibility assets into tourism product.
- Build an accessible itinerary with multiple things to do
- Build itinerary for blind guests
- Autism family itineraries.

Creating Content and Promoting Your Landing Page

- Convene a Disability 101 workshop for your staff utilizing experts from various local disability groups (mobility, blindness, neurodiversity etc)
- Subscribe to www.travelabilityinsider.com for updates on products, services and research
- Promote the existence of your accessibility offerings to locals and prospective visitors.
- News releases to local media outlets
- Partner with local/county disability organizations
- Targeted campaigns via social media platforms
- Reach out to disability travel bloggers
- List your Accessible Landing Page on TravelAbility.net

TOP TIPS FOR BECOMING ACCESSIBILITY- FRIENDLY



MAKE IT EASY FOR PEOPLE TO GET INFORMATION

- Let people know about the different ways your business is accessible
- Ensure your website meets web accessibility standards
- Create a dedicated and detailed accessibility page on your website
- Include people with disabilities in your marketing materials
- Use large print, easy-to-read fonts, short sentences and, where possible, icons in online or printed information
- Share accessibility-related testimonials from your customers on your website, social media and other sites, such as Tripadvisor

Source: Destination British Columbia



Customer Service

- Train staff on disability awareness and ensure they are familiar with the accessible features of your business
- Focus on the person, not their disability
- Speak directly to the customer, not their personal assistants

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

We would like to thank Kathleen Harvey, Manager, Visitor Services, Destination British Columbia for sharing this series of accessibility tips below as well as the Tips for Hotels and Attractions.

- Use respectful and appropriate language
- Reduce background noise
- Don't make assumptions—everyone is different
- Welcome service animals. Never attempt to pat or distract a service animal, but feel free to offer a water bowl

In and Around Public Spaces

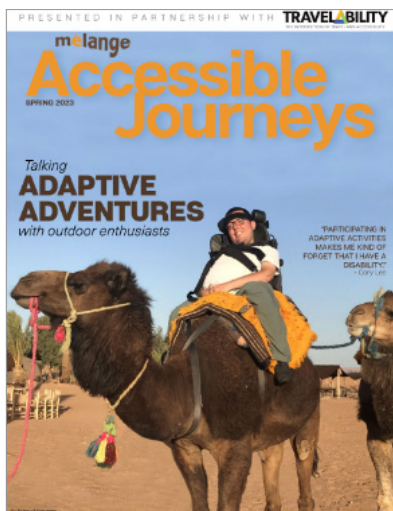
- Make sure all external and internal routes are free from obstacles. Routes should have firm, well maintained surfaces
- Use bright, contrasting colors to create visual contrast between key facility spaces, such as entrances
- Create clear sight lines between the entryway and service counter
- Make your entrance level, or use a portable ramp
- Ensure the floor or ground is non-slip and free from tripping hazards
- Add safety markings to glass doors

Assistance

- Ask the customer if they want help before providing assistance
- Ensure chairs are available for those who need them
- Offer alternative formats and communication supports, such as pen and paper, hearing loops or magnifying glasses

IN GENERAL -- TIPS FOR ATTRACTIONS

A quality experience is one of the most important things you can offer your customers. Accessibility removes barriers so everyone feels welcome when they visit your business. North Americans with disabilities spend an estimated \$19 billion per year on travel—and that doesn't include the friends and family they travel with. Here's how you can attract new and returning business from this important sector:



Marketing

- Tell people about your accessibility features in the same places you promote your attraction, including Google, Visitor Centers, Tripadvisor, HelloBC.com, and social media
- Include images of people with disabilities in your marketing materials
- Suggest quieter times to visit, and describe where queuing is required
- Create an Accessibility Site Guide that identifies rest areas, shade, water, weather shelters, and quiet areas,
- Promote your attraction in consumer publications targeted towards travelers with a disability



Wayfinding and interpretation

- Starting outside the parking area, ensure that clear arrival, exit and directional signs can be read in all light conditions and from a distance
- Place high contrast signs at an appropriate level for someone in a wheelchair
- Consider tactile signage and pictograms
- Ensure paths of travel are wide, even, slip resistant and free of barriers or obstacles
- Consider offering multiple formats for interpretative materials, such as print, audio and subtitled video

Customer Service and Amenities

- Offer multiple methods to purchase tickets
- Have dedicated staff to support visitors with accessibility needs
- Fast-track visitors who are unable to stand in a queue for long periods of time
- Consider providing outlets for people with power wheelchairs, scooters, and other electronic mobility devices and medical equipment
- Clearly identify a relief area for service animals
- Host disability-specific days and times, and consider concessions for personal attendants and caregivers



Dining

- Design food areas in ways that mobility device users can easily navigate
- Provide written menus and other information in large print versions, using easy-to-read fonts like 18-point Arial. Encourage staff to read menus aloud when required
- Place utensils within reach of wheelchair users
- Offer bendable straws and cup with handles

TIPS FOR HOTELS AND ACCOMMODATIONS



Booking

- Offer multiple options for booking, including web, email, text and phone
- Include images on your website of accessible features like entrances, reception,

rooms, bathrooms and on-site amenities, as well as detailed accessibility information

- Ask every visitor whether they have specific needs or requirements
- Offer a range of contact methods for questions, feedback and complaints
- Avoid soft or thick pile carpeting, or loose mats
- Make sure staff are on-hand to assist with luggage when requested
- Have at least one low counter
- Install a hearing loop at reception and in conference facilities
- Provide information in large print
- Offer seating
- Ensure staff are aware of transportation companies that are disability-friendly

Guest Service Tips and Practices

- Ensure guestrooms provide clear spaces to walk or roll without bumping into furniture
- Make sure light switches, thermostats and electrical outlets are accessible for people in wheelchairs to reach using one hand
- Install telephones with large buttons that are compatible with hearing aids
- Wash bed linens and towels with non-perfumed and eco-friendly detergent



- Offer rooms with a roll-in shower
- Install non-slip bathroom floors (wet and dry)
- Install handheld shower heads and lever taps
- Install toilet and shower grab bars
- Offer bath mats, shower stools, toilet seat height raisers and commode chairs



Dining

- Use plain English and large fonts on signage and menus
- Take room service orders via text to assist deaf guests
- Provide adequate space in restaurants or cafés for wheelchairs to move between areas
- Provide a separate quiet space in the restaurant for guests who are hard of hearing or have cognitive disabilities
- Provide a selection of seats with and without arms
- Offer reading glasses or a flashlight, if needed
- Have a list, or ensure staff are aware of local and accessible restaurants

Checkout

- Offer flexible arrangements for checkout
- Ask customers for feedback

- If you've implemented changes as a result of feedback, follow up with the visitor who suggested the changes so he or she is aware

Extras

- Create a Welcome Kit, in large print, with accessibility information about your business, nearby attractions, transportation and sites of interest
- Have vibrating alarm clocks with flashing lights available for loan



- Use visual and vibrating alerts for emergencies
- Ensure your staff understand and have recorded guests' evacuation requirements in case of emergency

TIPS FOR GUESTS WITH COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

- **Flexibility:** Does your check-in or ticketing process offer modifications or flexible options you can provide to expedite the process and avoid waiting in lines, etc.
- **Provide Visual Images:** Do you have videos or 360-degree tours? They can be helpful to prepare visitors for what to expect.
- **Provide Information on your website:** Do you have details about available accommodations, safety guidelines, or any special programs that you offer on your website?
- **Train your staff:** Are your staff trained with

tools they need in order to assist guests with cognitive disabilities?

- **Processes.** Do you have concrete processes in place for individuals who may become overwhelmed or need additional assistance and are they shared with all staff?
- Remember that sometimes, it can take time to implement accessibility options and that's ok - progress still helps you move toward your goals.

Tips for hotels/attraction/ restaurant suppliers

- **Room Preference:** Ask guest for their preference of room location. Some guest may prefer to be as far from the elevator as possible, others may not.
- **Alarms:** Does hotel have a door/window alarm to discourage elopements?
- **Restaurants:** Do they have private or secluded dining areas?
- **Attractions:** Do they have sensory zones or offer specific times/programs for autistic families during the year?

Cognitive tips courtesy of International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Services ([IBCCES.com](https://www.ibcces.com)).

E-LEARNING TRAINING VIDEOS FOR HOTEL EMPLOYEES



We are pleased to share the following e-learning videos as part of this playbook. Training videos around accessibility are difficult to find. e-learning videos that were produced by the accessibility director of [Scandic Hotels](#), a chain of 235 hotels throughout Scandinavia and Germany.

Understanding guest needs by disability:

- **REDUCED MOBILITY:** How to welcome a Guest with reduced mobility.
▶ [Watch video](#).
- **BLINDNESS:** Welcoming a Guest who is Blind: ▶ [Watch video](#).
- **DEAFNESS:** Welcoming a Guest who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
▶ [Watch video](#).
- **WHEELCHAIR USER:** Serving a Guest in a wheelchair: ▶ [Watch video](#).
- **DISABILITY SENSITIVITY:** Training video: ▶ [Watch video](#).

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ACCESSIBLE HOTELS



WHY HOTELS SHOULD INVEST IN ACCESSIBILITY

Should Hotel Executives Embrace Inclusivity for Disabled Travelers?



TRAVELABILITY
THE INTERSECTION OF TRAVEL AND DISABILITY

[See the full presentation.](#)

EASY LOW COST/NO COST FIXES FOR COMMON ACCESSIBILITY PROBLEMS

For Guest Who Use Wheelchairs:

- Hand dryers in accessible public bathrooms too high for wheelchair users: Should be positioned lower or offer paper towel dispenser within reach.
- Accessible bathroom and hotel room doors are too heavy. Using an Allen wrench, reduce pressure to 5 lbs.
- Hotel bank elevator buttons are often blocked by waste receptacle, ashtray or plants. Move obstacles.
- Restaurant table spacing too tight to maneuver wheelchair around without inconveniencing other customers. Reposition tables/chairs to create an access lane wide enough for wheelchairs, which will also help servers.
- The angle of portable ramps is sometimes too steep for wheelchair access. Purchase an adjustable Roll A Ramp. Cost: \$329+
- Accessible room temperature thermostat that is often blocked by an armchair. Move armchair to less obtrusive location.
- Disabled guest in wheelchair are not able to use bathroom mirrors. Purchase a portable beauty mirror available for \$17.99 on Amazon

- Electrical outlets in accessible rooms often located behind side tables for bedside lamps. Install easy-to-reach outlet above bedside table.
- Cords to open drapes in hotel rooms are often blocked by a chair. Move the chair.
- Deep carpeting in accessible room impedes wheelchair movement. Heavy duty plastic mats can be purchased for \$59.95 on Amazon
- All hotel check-in counters too high for wheelchair users to reach. Train reception staff to meet guest in front of check in counter.
- Hotel website lacks images of accessible sleeping room, bathroom and hotel entranceway. Have someone use a smart phone to snap images of entranceway, accessible sleeping room and bathroom and post them to website.
- Accessible pathways on grounds are unmarked. Make accessible routes visible without making signs by using colors to mark the path.
- Accessible parking space unable to accommodate vehicles with side door ramps
- Towel racks too high and unreachable. Reposition towel racks. (Ave. Cost: \$65)
- Shower faucets are unreachable from shower seat. Reposition seat closer to shower.
- No shower seat in accessible bathroom. Shower seat available for \$41 on Amazon.

For Blind Guests

- Create “action alley,” a surface (carpeting/mat) used for ingress and egress
- Housekeepers unknowingly move personal contents for blind guests making. Train housekeeping staff not to move personal effects for blind guests.
- Blind guests cannot distinguish shampoo from conditioner. Provide iPad at check-in with www.Aira.io and www.bemyeyes.com uploaded where volunteers come in via smartphone to offer assistance.
- TV remote only accessible through description and memorization. Television channels and programming available only visually. Thermostat available only visually. Provide iPad at check-in with www.bemyeyes.com uploaded where volunteers come in via smartphone.
- No service dog amenities. Provide poop pick up bags, dog bowls and relief areas at check-in.

For Guests with a Hearing Impairment







- No visible way for hearing impaired to know when phone is ringing or someone is at the door. Use visual cues i.e. blinking light at the door or purchase a vibrating pillow. [Available here](#).
- Install hearing loop at check in.

For Guests with Cognitive Disabilities







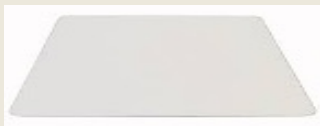
- Autistic families often assigned rooms near elevator when it should be as far away as possible.
- Distribute a “[Sensory Kit](#)” with objects that will reduce sensory issues

AD HOC ACCESSIBLE HOTEL TOOLKIT/SHOPPING LIST






These are the basic 13 items any hotel manager should have available to accommodate guests with a disability (Keep them in storage until they are put in the rooms before the guests check in). The mobility items came to use courtesy of Tapooz Travel and can be mostly purchased on Amazon.

PRODUCT	PRICE	IMAGE
Bathtub Transfer Chair	\$204	
Shower Chair	\$41.09	
Raised Toilet Seat	\$39.77	
FOLDABLE LIGHTWEIGHT RAMPS		
4' & 6' Suitcase style	\$109.00	
Adjustable Step-Up (4/6/8")	\$33.99	
Door Threshold Ramp (2) and/or step over	\$99	

CONTINUED: AD HOC ACCESSIBLE HOTEL TOOLKIT/SHOPPING LIST

PRODUCT	PRICE	IMAGE
Curtain Pull Rods (with round grab)	\$29.90	
Stand alone Mirror (with and without light)	\$17.99	
Hand-held shower head (to replace regular shower head)	\$26.99	
Quick adapt shower head (goes straight on the spout)	\$9.99	
Bed transfer slide board	\$37.99	
Movable grab bars with lockable suction cups . (short, medium and long)	\$27.99	
Heavy duty plastic mats (36"x48" / set of 6) For high-pile carpeting to create a solid path-of-travel for manual chair users	\$59.95	

CONTINUED: AD HOC ACCESSIBLE HOTEL TOOLKIT/SHOPPING LIST

PRODUCT	PRICE	IMAGE
AUTISM		
GE Window/Door Personal Alert Security System to prevent elopement	\$12.86 (for two) Amazon	
Fly for ALL . Flight simulations App produced by Alaska Airlines.	Free	
Mini Sensory Travel Kit	\$65-\$109, Fun and Function	
IBCCES Autism Card Helps identify special accommodations for user.	Free	
AUTISM KITS		
WsdCAM Door Alarm	\$39.95 Amazon prevent elopement	

TRAVELABILITY'S GUIDE TO ACCESSIBLE MEETINGS



SIX TIPS TO INCLUDE ON YOUR REGISTRATION FORM THAT WILL ACCOMMODATE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES:

1. **Ask attendees to communicate their needs:**

During registration, create a way for people who are registering to communicate that they have a disability which could impact their experience. Ask what accommodations you can provide them 1. For example, does the person use a mobility aid and need an accessible hotel room? What accessible features are preferred? Do they need a wheelchair accessible vehicle to transport them from the airport to the venue and off-site locations? Do they need a sign language interpreter? Do they need printed materials in braille?

2. **Make online registration accessible:** Ensure that attendees can register on a website that is accessible to people with disabilities. That means all images are described with alt-text, form fields are clearly and consistently identified, and links are properly labeled.

3. **Include an accommodation statement:** Include a disability accommodation statement in all publicity and pre-registration materials that invites participants with disabilities to request accommodations 14. This will enable the event planner to arrange most of the accommodations and services in advance.

4. **Provide clear instructions:** Provide clear instructions for the meeting, including the agenda, location, and time. Use simple language and avoid jargon.

5. **Provide multiple avenues for registration:** Provide multiple avenues for registration if registration is required; e.g. online, paper, in person.

6. **Follow up on requests:** Make sure you follow up on all requests received. If it appears you will be unable to meet a specific request, follow up with the individual who made the request to determine whether an alternative arrangement can be made.



7 TIPS TO HELP SET UP A MEETING FOR WHEELCHAIRS USERS:

1. **Ask attendees to communicate their needs:**

During registration, create a way for people who are registering to communicate that they have a disability that could impact their experience. Ask what accommodations you can provide them 1. For example, does the person use a mobility aid and need an accessible hotel room? What accessible features are preferred? Do they need a wheelchair accessible vehicle to transport them from the airport to the venue and off-site locations? Do they need a sign language interpreter? Do they need printed materials in braille?

2. **Accessible transportation and parking:** People who use wheelchairs may need accessible transportation to get from the airport to the meeting or event, as well as any off-site locations. Make arrangements with transportation companies that can provide wheelchair-accessible vans 1. The parking lots at all the locations where you are holding

meetings and events need to be evaluated to ensure there are ample parking spaces for guests with disability placards. Be aware that wheelchair-accessible vans often have ramps or platform lifts that deploy from the side. Van-accessible spaces need to be clearly marked.

3. **Accessible meeting layout:** For every wheelchair space, it's best to remove two standard chairs. The chairs must not be attached to each other so that participants can move or adjust them as required. Consider using the chevron style classroom set-up, which provides for more space and flexibility.
4. **Accessible restrooms:** Ensure that restrooms are accessible for people with disabilities. This includes having grab bars, wide stalls, and sinks at an appropriate height.
5. **Assistive technology:** Provide assistive technology such as hearing loops, captioning, and sign language interpreters.
6. **Training staff:** Train your staff on how to interact with people with disabilities and how to use assistive technology.
7. **Emergency evacuation plan:** Have an emergency evacuation plan in place that includes people with disabilities.

Sources: 1. Real-World Tips to Accommodate Attendees with Disabilities | SM.com (smartmeetings.com). 2. Best Practices for Creating an Accessible Conference or Meeting Layout (accessibility.com). 3. Accessible Meeting and Event Checklist – Accessibility Information (cornell.edu)

7 TIPS TO HELP ACCOMMODATE BLIND OR LOW VISION ATTENDEES:

1. **Start planning early:** In the first invitation email, ask if anyone has blindness or another disability that will require special accommo-



dations. That will give you time to make arrangements.

2. **Make online registration accessible:** Ensure that attendees can register on a website that is accessible to people who are blind. That means all images are described with alt-text, form fields are clearly and consistently identified, and links are properly labeled.
3. **Welcome guide dogs:** Some people who are blind may bring a guide dog. Make sure in advance that everyone – including staff at the meeting site – knows that the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) specifically allows service animals to enter buildings and remain with their owners.
4. **Describe the layout of the meeting room:** When entering a conference room or other large meeting space with someone who is visually impaired, give a brief description of how the room is arranged – tables, chairs, podiums and so on. That will make it easier for him or her to navigate.
5. **Remove unsafe obstacles:** Small objects on the ground (like AV equipment or bags) and objects protruding from the walls (like display cases) can be hazardous. Make sure there's a barrier-free path into and throughout the meeting room.
6. **Introduce yourselves:** Ask all participants to introduce or identify themselves at the

beginning of the meeting. This lets people who are blind know who's in the room with them. Also, ask people to identify themselves each time they speak during the meeting.

7. **Bring accessible handouts:** If you plan to share printed material at the meeting, prepare accessible versions, too (like braille or large print). If the handouts are ready in advance, send digital copies in accessible formats (like Microsoft Word or plain text) to participants with visual impairment ahead of time so they can listen to them with text-to-speech software on a laptop, or read them in braille on a refreshable braille display.

Sources: 1. Make your meeting accessible – Perkins School for the Blind. 2. Designing and Navigating Spaces for the Vision Impaired | BigRentz. 3. 30 Apps, Devices and Technologies for People With Vision Impairments - American Academy of Ophthalmology (aao.org)



9 TIPS TO HELP ACCOMMODATE THE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING:

1. **Start planning early:** In the first invitation email, ask if anyone has hearing loss or another disability that will require special accommodations. That will give you time to make arrangements.
2. **Make online registration accessible:** Ensure that attendees can register on a website that is accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. That means all images are described with alt-text, form fields are clearly and consistently identified, and links are

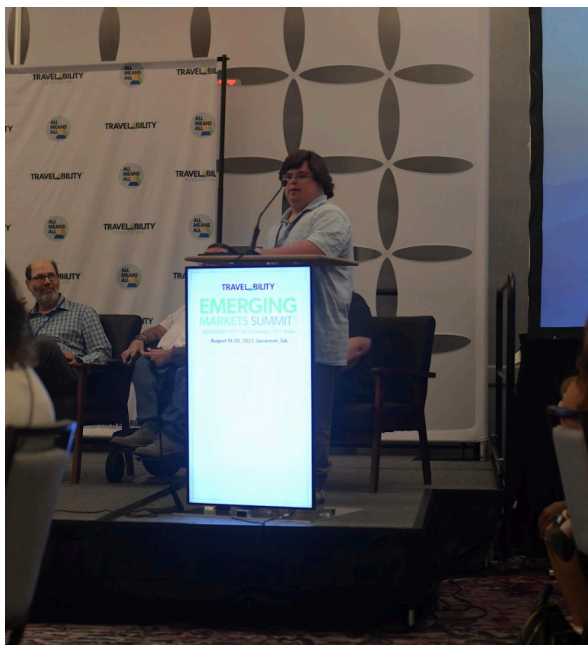
properly labeled.

3. **Provide sign language interpreters:** Hire sign language interpreters who are experienced with conference interpreting. Check state licensing requirements for sign language interpreters, and make sure the interpreter is certified by a nationally recognized organization.
4. **Provide assistive listening devices:** Assistive listening devices (ALDs) can help people with hearing loss hear better in noisy environments. ALDs include FM systems, infrared systems, and loop systems.
5. **Captioning:** Provide real-time captioning or live transcription services for all presentations and speeches.
6. **Visual aids:** Use visual aids such as PowerPoint presentations, videos, and handouts to supplement spoken information.
7. **Position speakers properly:** Position speakers so that they face the audience and speak clearly into a microphone.
8. **Reduce background noise:** Reduce background noise as much as possible by closing doors and windows, turning off fans, and avoiding noisy equipment/
9. **Test equipment beforehand:** Test all equipment beforehand to ensure it is working properly.

Sources: How to Make Your Corporate Meetings Accessible to People with Hearing Loss | Convene. 10 Tips for Video Conferencing Calls with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals | 2axend. Accessible Conference Guide | SIGACCESS. When Do You Need to Provide a Sign Language Interpreter in a Business (1818legal.com)

9 TIPS TO HELP ACCOMMODATE PEOPLE WHO ARE NEURODIVERSE OR HAVE COGNITIVE DISABILITIES:

1. **Start planning early:** In the first invitation email, ask if anyone has a cognitive disability that will require special accommodations. That will give you time to make arrangements.



8. **Provide assistive technology:** Provide assistive technology such as text-to-speech software or screen readers for people who have difficulty reading or comprehending written materials.
9. **Training staff:** Train your staff on how to interact with people with cognitive disabilities and how to use assistive technology.

Sources: Accessible Meetings and Events Minimize Surprises - Plan Ahead: (cam.ac.uk). How to Make Your Virtual Meetings and Events Accessible to the Disability Community - Rooted in Rights

21 TIPS TO PREPARING YOUR MEETING FOR PEOPLE WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

2. **Make online registration accessible:** Ensure that attendees can register on a website that is accessible to people with cognitive disabilities. That means all images are described with alt-text, form fields are clearly and consistently identified, and links are properly labeled.
3. **Provide clear instructions:** Provide clear instructions for the meeting, including the agenda, location, and time. Use simple language and avoid jargon.
4. **Provide visual aids:** Use visual aids such as PowerPoint presentations, videos, and handouts to supplement spoken information.
5. **Reduce background noise:** Reduce background noise as much as possible by closing doors and windows, turning off fans, and avoiding noisy equipment.
6. **Provide breaks:** Provide regular breaks during the meeting to allow attendees to rest and recharge.
7. **Use plain language:** Use plain language when communicating with attendees. Avoid using technical terms or jargon that may be difficult for some people to understand.
1. Always ask for dietary restrictions in registration – even if it’s only a small snack being provided.
2. Ensure your registration questions are clear so you can differentiate between preference and allergy. For example, list Celiac disease separately from gluten-free if you are using a drop down.
3. When sourcing venues, ask specifically how they can accommodate food allergies and give your business to ones that have a good plan in place and take this topic seriously.
4. Contact the guest before the event to discuss their allergy and find out how severe it is. Some allergies might be mild and don’t need many accommodations while others can be extremely severe. Ask if it’s an airborne allergen and what level of risk it is.
5. Share the menu ahead of time. This will reduce anxiety.
6. If a guest has specific questions around food handling, they might want to speak to the chef themselves. You can help facilitate this.

7. Confirm whether they are staying in the hotel. If they are, ask for the guestroom to be cleared of any allergens and disinfected, if necessary. Ensure a fridge is in the room to keep their own food or medication.
8. Ask for their emergency action plan to understand what you and the venue can do to help in case of an allergic reaction.
9. If it is a buffet, make sure the venue is prepared to offer a separate meal which is covered and placed on a separate table – they should never be told to eat from the same buffet in case of cross contamination (unless the food allergy is very mild). Their plate of food should have their name on it, not just gluten-free as other people might take it.
10. Ask venue to label everything with what the food contains and does not contain. Label food on buffets and food being passed – this can be lifesaving information!
11. Speak to the chef about providing food alternatives which look similar to what the rest of the group is being served – for example, if everyone gets chicken, provide the guest chicken, but without the allergen. This will avoid the focus of conversation being on their meal.
12. For a reception of passed appetizers, ask for a plate to be created of foods that can be offered to the guest at the beginning of the event and ask servers to describe ingredients.
13. If the allergy is airborne, have a conversation on how the venue plans to keep your guest safe. Make sure the food will not be on your menu but also ask if they will avoid the allergen being served in other areas near your group. Will they disinfect shared surfaces?
14. If the venue cannot accommodate the dietary request – ask if they would allow guest to bring their own food and use a fridge and safely heat up their meal.
15. Ask who you can speak to onsite if you have any concerns. Are there Epi Pens available? Find out where the closest hospital is, just in case.
16. Prepare Onsite!
17. Meet the Banquet Captain and do a walk-through of procedures.
18. When guest arrives at the registration desk, provide a dietary card for them to use to show server at meals (use a discreet card, not one visible to everyone outside of mealtime).
19. Tell guests how to use their dietary card and where they can find their meals throughout the event. Tell them what to do if they run into problems, who to tell and how to get to the hospital.
20. Introduce them to the Banquet Captain and/or other staff who can help them during meals or breaks.
21. Discreetly check in with them during the event to answer questions and ensure they are being accommodated.



Source: Corporate Meetings Network.

AN ACCESSIBILITY VIDEO SERIES **ASSESSING YOUR CONVENTION CENTER**

Courtesy of Rosemarie Rossetti, PhD.



The PCMA Annual Convening Leaders event was hosted at the Columbus, OH convention center in 2023. They joined forces with Rosemarie Rossetti, PhD, who is not only a wheelchair user but also an accessibility ambassador for Visit Columbus, an accessibility consultant, and a keynote speaker. Together, they evaluated every section of the convention center. The footage from this assessment was then segmented into the following concise clips.

Assess Your Convention Center Accessibility	https://youtu.be/7aRkz8ERtKU
Food Labeling at Meetings and Events	https://youtu.be/vuhDiIRPKYk
Tables Can Be Obstacles	https://youtu.be/T_c1SzqpPMg
Table and Chair Setup at Networking Events.	https://youtu.be/P-KMNx6cpZO
Avoid Sensory Overload	https://youtu.be/wg19h1Sarlo
Guest Services Desk Height	https://youtu.be/BSE0jDNDjLk
Make Wheelchairs and Scooters Available	https://youtu.be/TZb4ZUrZow
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion PLUS Accessibility.	https://youtu.be/Oek-coB3Yyq
Hire an Accessibility Consultant	https://youtu.be/pPv8aufWIPc
Registration Questions and Follow Up	https://youtu.be/9vo05r03ihq
Accessible Restrooms.	https://youtu.be/DUw4iY5TA3A
Universal Changing Tables and Nursing Mother's Room	https://youtu.be/TOMBpZS1j40
Accessible Restroom Signage	https://youtu.be/Crn_S3pZ-DE
Accommodating Service Animals	https://youtu.be/oV3qy7CGWl0
Sign Language Interpreters.	https://youtu.be/3cqZMegLx80
Captioning on Projection Screens.	https://youtu.be/jbfl6NtPgDQ
Accessible Transportation and Parking	https://youtu.be/R4qhF1sdI9Q
Wayfinding Signage.	https://youtu.be/BwkFO6veFo8
Accommodating Low Vision and Blind Attendees.	https://youtu.be/0tZ7qGhps1M
Space Planning for Wheelchairs and Scooters	https://youtu.be/EdbysZwYjA4
Food Placement and Assistance	https://youtu.be/EIXYCA7Fvg4
Accessible Shuttles	https://youtu.be/opPZa3hxVAQ
Preplanning Avoids Unintended Consequences	https://youtu.be/l_8XF91gFBO

Additional Resources for Accessible Meeting Planners

Harvard University Accessible Meetings Guide

<https://accessibility.huit.harvard.edu/hosting-accessible-remote-meetings-and-events>

Remote Meetings and Events

<https://accessibility.huit.harvard.edu/hosting-accessible-remote-meetings-and-events>

THE DMO PERSPECTIVE: WELCOMING ACCESSIBLE MEETINGS

FY22 CAMPAIGN

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Objectives

- Drive interest in Tampa Bay for meetings and conventions

Strategies

- Continue to engage with meeting planners across the US
- Build awareness for Tampa Bay's recent meeting successes, new developments, and benefits for large and small meetings
- Build integrated media plans with key publications and organizations for a broad reach across their audiences
- Adapt to the new environment and heavy-up digital components to reach planners with the ability to track engagement



[Watch the Presentation](#)

ACCESSIBLE OUTDOORS



Outdoors for Everyone: What Makes a Better Park



The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families impacted by paralysis; we believe everyone on this planet deserves to experience the beauty of nature.

Unfortunately, nature and accessibility are in conflict, making it difficult for the **nearly 5.4M people living with paralysis** in the U.S. to enjoy the great outdoors. From unpaved paths to eroding trails, people living with disabilities are deterred from outdoor experiences. We want to change that.

For Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month in September, we are launching the Reeve Foundation's 'Outdoors for Everyone' initiative, encouraging people to raise awareness of outdoor equity for people living with all forms of paralysis. Reeve is partnering with parks, trails and organizations around the U.S. to identify and implement accessible and inclusive areas and activities for all people, including those living with disabilities, their families, and caregivers.

As part of this initiative, the Reeve Foundation created an 'Accessible Outdoor Checklist' for parks, recreation centers, and others to ensure people living with paralysis and other disabilities can enjoy the outdoors because the outdoors is for everyone.

BEFORE ARRIVALS

For people living with disabilities such as paralysis or who require mobility devices, it is essential to plan ahead for the great outdoors. National parks, community centers, and other recreational spaces have an obligation to offer easily accessible and up-to-date information online and with staff to ensure safety. Here are items to consider as you plan or work with partners in this space:



WEBSITE AND MAP INFORMATION:

- Ensuring trail-accessible information is readily available to users can make or break the trail experience. Websites and resources should include:
 - Maps of accessible features (e.g. parking, ramps, restrooms, benches, charging stations, information on drinking water access, etc.)
 - Detailed trail information such as the length of trail, trail surface type(s) throughout the duration of the journey, typical and minimum trail width, typical and maximum running slope, typical and maximum cross slope and areas where there are obstacles over two inches high.
 - Photos and user reviews to inform visitors of what to expect.
 - Warnings about wild animals they may encounter.
 - Any safety information park users need to be aware of.



PARKING AND ARRIVAL/DROP-OFF AREAS:

- Accessible parking spaces and drop-off areas should be located on the shortest accessible route to an accessible entrance, relative to other spaces in the same parking lot.
- If there is more than one accessible entrance, accessible parking spaces should be dispersed to enable people to park near as many accessible entrances as possible.
- By the numbers:
 - Standard accessible parking spaces must be at least eight feet wide.
 - Accessible van parking spaces must be at least eleven feet wide.
 - The access aisle for both accessible car and van spaces is required to be a minimum of five feet.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Parking spaces, drop-off areas and trained staff are among a few items that help create a smooth and safe trip for people living with paralysis. Location and layout of park facilities should, at a minimum, meet ADA compliance. Other items to consider include:



PARKING SPACES:

- At bare minimum, the number of accessible parking spaces required by the ADA depends on the total number of parking spaces in the lot. For example:
 - Lots with 1-25 parking spots: Require one accessible parking spot that also works for vans.
 - Lots with 26-50: Two accessible parking spaces and one that is a van-accessible parking space.
- Consider increasing the number of accessible spaces beyond the ADA-required amount. Without parking, there is no access.



SIGNAGE FOR PASSENGER DROP-OFF/PICK-UP:

- When designing or considering the parking lot, think about signs and paint markings indicating accessible parking and passenger drop-off/pick-up areas (e.g., clearly marked access aisles, parking space dimensions).
- Making sure signage for passenger drop off/pick up is also in braille, to be inclusive of all communities.
- On online websites and resources that signage is visible upon arrival.



TRAINED STAFF ASSISTANCE:

- Consider professional training for onsite staff once a year or before they start. Staff should be trained in how to interact and accommodate park visitors living with disabilities in areas such as:
 - How to appropriately assist someone living with a disability (e.g., using identity-first language, seeking verbal permission first before helping).
 - Up-to-date knowledge of accessible trail features (e.g., number of benches on the trail and how frequently they are installed along the trail).
 - In-depth knowledge of each trail segment (e.g., if there are changes in trail surface).
- If professional staff assistance is not feasible, a detailed trail guide should be offered.
- Provide readily accessible park ranger contact information in case of emergency.

ON THE TRAIL

When physical or environmental considerations prevent a trail from being fully accessible, accurate information on trail features, like trailheads, help park visitors determine if the trail is right for them. When planning and designing trails, or identifying park partners for activities, consider the following:



TRAILHEADS WITH DETAILED INFORMATION:

- The trailhead is the first encounter a person has with the trail and it sets the tone for the entire experience. Adequate information needs to be front and center before one embarks on a trail. For example:
 - Including and disclosing what is available vs. what is not available, i.e., restrooms, water fountains, in addition to the benches/resting intervals already included.
 - The minimum width, maximum slope, and condition of the tread surface.
 - Whether there are benches/resting intervals along the way.
 - The types of restroom or break room facilities available along the trail.
 - Descriptions of trail surfaces and if it's consistent throughout the trail (e.g., paved, gravel, sand, rocky, etc.)



TRAIL DESIGN:

- Simple features to improve access with sensitivity to the natural environment. For example:
 - Widened trail barriers: Many trails would be accessible if entrances were wider or gates were adjusted to make maneuvering easier when navigating tight corners.
 - Removing barriers at sitting height: Visual barriers at sitting height are a common problem on wheel-chair accessible trails. Have at least one area with a lower barrier or install a barrier you can see through for both safety and scenery.
 - More frequent seating marked on maps: Install more benches so people can sit and recharge. Mark seating options on the park map so people can plan.
 - Access to drinking water for visitors and service animals.
- Develop a trail map that includes emergency plans for first responders who can support people living with paralysis.



TRAIL MAINTENANCE:

- Regular trail maintenance allows increased safety for all park-goers, regardless of whether they are living with paralysis or not. Be sure to consider the following factors when planning regular maintenance, or partnering with a park. Also, prepare for post-increment weather maintenance.
 - Removing fallen trees, broken branches or tree roots, filling and/or block off potholes.
 - Maintaining trail beds and repairing trail surfaces using wheelchair-friendly materials.
 - Repairing tread obstacles.
 - Conducting erosion control and drainage work.
 - Working with people who use mobility aids/wheelchairs to check trails and get their feedback.

For more information, visit ChristopherReeve.org or call our Information Specialists at 1-800-539-7309.

Our Information Specialists are available
Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. ET - 8 p.m. ET.
You can also leave a message if you are calling after hours.



GLOSSARY

Alteration: A change in the original purpose, intent, or function of a trail that could also affect usability.

Clear Tread Width: Width of traveled surface between obstacles on the ground and above the ground. Must be a minimum of 36 inches and maintained the entire distance of the trail.

- Two people using wheelchairs need a 60-inch clear tread width to pass comfortably and safely on an outdoor recreation access route.

Constructed Features: Commonly found along trails or as part of trails (e.g., overnight shelters, toilets, fire rings, picnic tables, and tent pads)

Cross Slope: Side-to-side slope of a trail tread. Cross slopes are necessary to provide drainage for water and prevent damage to the trail surface, especially on unpaved or natural surfaces.

Firm Surface: Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG) defines a firm surface as one that resists deformations by indentations.

Openings: Gaps in the surface of a trail such as spaces between the planks on a bridge or boardwalk. Must be less than ½ inch in diameter ensuring nothing can pass through.

Outdoor Recreation Access Routes: Unobstructed path designed for pedestrian use that connects constructed features in a campground, camping unit, picnic area, trailhead, or other recreation site where modifications are provided for visitor convenience and comfort according to the Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines.

Passing Space: A trail tread with a minimum of 60 inches to ensure greater access for people using mobility devices to turn around.

Protruding Objects: Hazardous objects (such as signs) that protrude into the trail clear tread width, passing spaces, and resting areas and that are between 27 inches and 80 inches above the travel surface. Do not allow constructed features to extend into the clear width area more than 4 inches.

Running Slope: A grade and the lengthwise slope of a trail, parallel to the direction of travel.

Resting Intervals: Level areas that provide a place for people to take a break and rest before continuing on the trail.

Slope: The incline of a surface.

Surface: Trail surfaces, passing surfaces and resting intervals that are firm and stable.

Stable Surface: A surface that's not permanently affected by expected weather conditions and can sustain normal wear and tear from the expected use(s) of the area between planned maintenance cycles according to the Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines.

Trailhead: Outdoor space designated by the entity responsible for administering or maintaining the trail to serve as a primary access point to the trail.

Trail Constructed Feature Examples: Trail bridges, boardwalks, waterbars, and switchbacks.

Tread Obstacle: Anything that interrupts the evenness of the tread surface.

OUTSIDE SOURCES

U.S. Department of **Agriculture's Accessibility Guidebook for Outdoor Recreation and Trails**

U.S. Department of **Agriculture's Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines**

U.S. Access Board's **Outdoor Developed Areas Guide**

U.S. Department of Transportation's **Rail with Trails: Best Practices and Lessons Learned**

Yosemite National Park's **2022 Accessibility Guide**

Access Recreation's **Guidelines for Providing Trail Information to People with Disabilities**

The National Park Service Accessibility Task Force's **All In! Accessibility in the National Park Service**

This publication is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$8,700,000 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor endorsement by, ACL/HHS, or the U.S. government.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF BUILDING ACCESSIBLE TRAILS –

Andrew Leary, Director of Sustainable Tourism and Partnerships, Leave No Trace and Heidi Walters, Director Partner and Industry Relations, Visit North Carolina present at the Emerging Markets Summit June 2022 in Orlando, FL [Watch the Full Presentation](#)

SERVICES & INNOVATIONS FROM THE INNOVATEABLE PITCHFEST



VIDEO PITCHES FROM TRAVELABILITY'S INNOVATEABLE SHOWCASE

The most promising innovations and technologies from four TravelAbility pitch events.

The following products were the finalists at TravelAbility's "LAUNCHPAD" the worlds only pitch event for adaptive innovations, technologies and services that help make travel easier for people with disabilities.

- **Revolve Air:** What happens when an engineer with a background in designing Formula One cars and Flying Taxis develops wheelchair small and light enough to fit as carry-on.

Travel Use Case: Revolve air can either be purchased outright, or as an on-demand rental via an app. It may also be rented via airport concessions. [Watch our pitch.](#)

- **WelcoMe:** An inclusive customer service app that alerts businesses when a disabled user is 15 minutes from their location. Includes information about disability and purpose of visit. Additionally, the "Button" companion app [enables users to open doors and operate pedestrian crossings with their smartphone.](#) (Scotland). [Watch our pitch.](#)

Travel Use Case: DMO's can persuade their attractions, restaurants and museums partners to engage with WelcoMe as an instantaneous training partner. And the "Button" app addresses the fact that 41% of disabled travelers name heavy doors as the greatest obstacle they encounter when traveling.

- **Alinker.** What began as an innovative non-motorized "[walking-bike](#)" designed for people with mobility challenges who are looking to maintain an active lifestyle, has evolved into a wellness ecosystem that includes Alinker yoga classes, nutrition programs supplemented by a produce farm in Kentucky that employs disabled workers. (Canada) [Watch our pitch.](#)

Travel Use Case: Resort Hotels, Cruise Lines can use them as innovative amenities for those using walkers and DMO's can recommend them to city managers/recreational managers.

- **Mobi-Mat:** Not only does the Mobi-mat produce slip-free [Rollout mats for beaches](#) for uneven surfaces it also makes floating wheelchairs for beach and water use. (France). [Watch our pitch.](#)

Travel Use Case: DMO's can recommend both products to beach and watersports nature providers to enhance their accessibility for wheelchair users. Meanwhile, hotels with pools that are not equipped with a power lift may use the floating chair as an accommodation that may reduce the chance of being sued.

- **Vispero:** Vispero has introduced the Jaws Kiosk, portable kit that adds screen reader software that transforms self-service kiosks so they can be used by the visually impaired.(Florida) [Watch our pitch.](#)

Travel Use Case: DMO's with visitor center kiosks, as well as airports, airlines, attractions and cruise lines where self-service kiosks are widely used.

- **Autism Travel Club** formerly known as Champion Autism Network and Lead with Love Training Co., provides impactful, engaging, accessible and affordable online Autism Awareness and sensitivity training modules for the hospitality industry and essential workers, a discount card program and the Autism Traveler app to support people and families living with autism in a growing number of communities around the USA and globe. [Watch our pitch.](#)

Travel Use Case: Hotels, resorts, restaurants and attractions can now prepare their staff to serve families with autistic children, while the Club network can help promote them to the autism family market.

- **Picture Live:** A platform that empowers destinations to transform one dimensional images, such

as tourism brochures, postcards, or posters, into captivating audio-described or ASL-described performances. By placing their smartphones on the brochures, users can activate content as audio descriptions or ASL interpreters through a QR code. [Watch our Pitch](#)

Travel Use Case: DMO's can create two-dimensional tourism brochures. Museums and attractions can create brochures that can be accessed by blind or deaf users.

- [Centaur Robotics](#) is a power wheelchair that can fit in small spaces like a regular dining room chair. It also has a unique feature that allows the user to adjust their height and reach eye level with others. [Watch our Pitch](#)

Travel Use Cases: Available for use by airports either as a supplement to existing wheelchair assistants or for rent while a traveler is in-destination.

- [Spoke App](#) is a voice for the silence. No matter where you are, deaf or hard of hearing users can read what's being announced on their phone. [Watch our pitch.](#)

Travel Use Case: Airports, train stations, malls, and other public places will no longer be a mystery.

- [Enchroma Glasses](#) let people with color blindness experience the richness of colors. [Watch our Pitch](#)

Travel Use Case: DMO's can purchase a pack of 20 Enchroma glasses, loan them to museums or welcome centers where they can be lent out to visitors who are color blind.

- [DateAbility](#) is a dating app that caters to the needs of people with disabilities and chronic conditions. It is a place where you can find romance and friendship with people who share your experiences. [Watch our Pitch](#)

Travel Use Case: The density of the app's users is such that matches often involve travel to destinations for the initial in-person meeting.

- [TranslateLive's ILA](#) is a two-sided tablet that can display translation in over 200 languages, audio descriptions, and ASL interpreters in real time. [Watch our Pitch](#)

Travel Use Case: Enables front desk staff from hotels, attractions, airport or visitor center to provide real time ASL translation..

- [VACAYIT](#): A service that enables the blind and visually impaired to learn about your destination using audio descriptions that provide a curated and immersive sensory experience. [Watch our Pitch](#)

Travel Use Case: DMO's can create an audio described itinerary to help blind and low vision visitors to experience their attractions, museums and points of interest in a virtual way

- [Wheel the World](#) provides destinations with an end-to-end solution by matching people with specific disabilities with the hotels and tour programs that meet their specific needs. [Watch our Pitch](#)

Travel Use Case: Destinations, hotels, attractions, restaurants. The company sends "mappers" to assess up to 200 data points each for hotels, attractions, restaurants for mobility, blindness, deafness and cognitive disabilities the results of which are not only listed on their booking engine, but can also be included on the DMO website as an enhancement to their accessibility landing page.

- [Good Maps](#): Goodmaps is a [wayfinding platform that uses LiDar laser-driven technology](#) where clients can design, edit and access their digital maps so that they are useable not only by the blind travelers to find points of interest, but helps wheelchair users locate accessible areas such as bathrooms. (KY) [Watch our pitch](#)

Travel Use Case: Theme parks, attractions, hotels and convention centers would be suitable uses cases.

- [Service Animal Travel Solutions](#): A central [database for service animal verification](#) recently launched

with Alaska Airlines as their first airline partner. Once a passenger form is completed it is stored in a proprietary database which can be used by other airlines. This was founded by Open Doors Organization and Gina Emrich, formerly accessibility and customer service specialist for American Airlines for 33 years.(IL) [Watch our pitch](#)

Travel Use Case: Ultimately, once this is rolled out to other airlines, it will save passengers who travel with documented service animals an immense amount of time and paperwork.

- [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower](#): The Sunflower icon discreetly indicates to staff and professional service providers during the travel experience that the person has a hidden disability (e.g autism, dementia etc) and may need additional support, help or a little more time. Widely used in the UK by airports, hotels and retailers, they are now expanding into North America (UK) [Watch our pitch](#)

Travel Use Case: Airports, theme parks, attractions and retail venues.

- [Threshold 360](#). With coverage of more than 100,000 locations in hundreds of destinations and over two million views daily, Threshold is the world's largest provider of interactive 360° virtual tours. For travelers who need to "Know before they go" this is an ideal feature. [Watch our pitch](#)

Travel Use Case: Destinations, conference resorts, hotels and attractions currently use these videos for marketing purposes. Families with members on the autism spectrum can use virtual video tours to familiarize themselves and their children with a visual experience of what to expect.

- [Omeo](#): Hands-free power wheelchair that uses Active Seat Control technology in which users core muscles control movement. Features include access to off-road experiences, zero-degree turning circle and battery range of 40 miles on one charge.(New Zealand) [Watch our pitch](#)

Travel Use Case: Outdoor destinations, ski resorts and mountain resorts can work with the company to schedule demo day promotions for disabled visitors.

- [Aira](#): connects people who are blind or low vision to a remote trained professional agent who can provide hands-free assistance at the touch of a button. [Watch our pitch](#)

Travel Use Case: Airports, hotels and attractions who can assist blind travelers with information in real time.

- [Be My Eyes](#) is a free app that connects blind and low-vision individuals with sighted volunteers and companies from all over the world through a live video call. They have over 2,000,000 volunteers worldwide. [Watch our pitch](#)

Traveler Use Case: Hotels can have this app pre-loaded and available at check in to help blind guests navigate their hotel room.

- [Whill](#) is the brand name for the next generation of "smart" and stylish self-driving power wheelchairs that can be summoned with an app.

Travel Use Case: Airports can use them as wheelchair assistant robots for transporting passengers to their gates.

- [Free2Go Rollator](#) is the first product to combine the benefits of a raised toilet seat, toilet safety frame, and rolling walker.

Travel Use Case: Amenity for cruise line passengers, hotels and attractions

- [Jeenie](#) is a language assistance app that connects travelers with on-demand sign-language translators through three party video chats. www.jeenie.com

Travel Use Case: Hotels, attractions, airports can make this service available to customers.

RESOURCES





A collection of products, innovations, technologies, services, assessment providers and amenities that fill the gap between what’s needed and what’s available. All have either been vetted through the InnovateAble Pitch Fest, or implemented by members of the TravelAbility community. We have divided our TravelAbility Trusted Partners into 2 tables- Service Providers and Solutions Providers. Access their web-sites by clicking on the company names.

THE SERVICE PROVIDERS

Legend: M=Mobility, B=Blindness C=Cognitive/Autism D=Deafness O=Other

TRAVELABILITY TRUSTED PARTNER	PRIMARY EXPERTISE + LIVED EXPERIENCE	ASSESSMENT	TRAINING	SPEAKING	CONSULTING
The Slatin Group Peter Slatin CEO peter@theslatingroup.com	B	•	•	•	•
Wheel the World Camilo Navarro, Co-founder camilo@wheeltheworld.com	M	•	•	•	•
SAGE Inclusion John Sage, CEO Founder john@sageinclusion.com	M	•	•	•	•
Open Doors Organization Eric Lipp, Founder ericlipp@opendoorsnfp.org	M	•	•	•	•
Visitable Joe Jamison, Founder mailto:joe@visitable.org	M		•	•	•
Access Now Maayan Ziv, Founder maayan@accessnow.ca	M	•	•	•	•
Incredible Memories Travel Kristy Durso, Founder kristy@incrediblememoriestravel.com	M, C, O		•	•	•

TRAVELABILITY TRUSTED PARTNER	PRIMARY EXPERTISE + LIVED EXPERIENCE	ASSESSMENT	TRAINING	SPEAKING	CONSULTING
WheelchairTravel.org John Morris, Founder john@wheelchairtravel.org	M		•		
Rosemarie Rosetti - Universal Design Lab Dr. Rosemarie Rosetti Rosemarie@rosemariespeaks.com	M (meetings/ conventions)	•	•	•	•
Maahs Travels Fred Maahs, Jr. CEO fred@maahstravels.com	M			•	•
Kulture City Uma Srivastava uma@kulturecity.org	C		•		•
American Printing House Mike May mmay@aph.org	B			•	•
Deaf Friendly Consulting Melissa (Echo) Greenlee, Founder echo@deaffriendly.com	D		•	•	•
IBCCES Meredith Tekin, CEO meredith@ibcces.com	C		•	•	•
Autism Travel Club Becky Large, Founder CEO becky@autismtravel.club	C		•	•	•
Autism Double Checked Alan Day, Founder and CEO Aday@autismdoublechecked.com	C	•	•	•	•
AbleVU Meegan Winters, Founder meegan@ableeyes.com	C	•		•	•
Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lynn Smith, Chief Marketing Officer lynn@hdsunflower.com	C	•	•	•	

THE SOLUTION PROVIDERS

Innovations, Technologies and Amenities that can Bridge the Gap between What's Available and What's Needed to make travel easier for people with disabilities.

THE PROBLEM	THE SOLUTION	THE WHY
HEARING		
48M Americans live with hearing loss. HEARING LOOPS boost audio clarity in noisy public spaces for people who travel, in spite of their hearing loss.	Audio Directions USE CASE: Hotels, attractions, convention centers, airports CONTACT: Peggy Bell, peggy@ad4h.com	ADA Compliance re: Effective Communications = Assistive Hearing LOOPS for 1:1 conversations at reception/info desks + FULL ROOM LOOPS for meetings, presentations, entertainment, etc.
Over 10 million adults who are deaf or hard of hearing can benefit from hearing loops, but a reliable one-stop source installers are difficult to find.	Contacta USE CASE: airports, convention centers, attractions CONTACT: Jim Scott, CEO, jim@contactainc.com	Over the past 14 years, through their dealer network and relationships with the deaf community, Contacta has become the leading provider of hearing loop installers nationally.
The major barrier for deaf travelers is the lack of communication of major announcements in public places such as airports, events and conventions.	Spoke USE CASE: Airports, train stations, hotels, cruise lines. CONTACT: Guy Vales, gvales@metcove.com	Spoke is an app that captures and delivers audio announcements as text to passengers' smartphones in any of 150 languages and ASL that would be translated and converted to English.
Live ASL interpreters as well as foreign language interpreters for over 50 languages are in short supply and quite expensive.	Translate Live USE CASE: check in counters at hotels, attractions airports CONTACT: jennifer.quigley@translatelive.com	Translate Live is a two-sided device where users can speak, spell out or type in an entire conversation that is instantly communicated to the other party in ASL or their native language.
VISION		
Blind or low vision people traveling alone may need assistance navigating busy airports, train stations or other gathering points.	Be My Eyes USE CASE: AI-powered visual assistance CONTACT: Todd Kuypers CEO, todd@bemyeyes.com	BeMyEyes connects blind people needing sighted support with volunteers or AI agents who provide live, on-demand access to visual information and navigation via live video around the world.
There are over 12 million people in America with colorblindness who cannot enjoy the vibrant colors of fall foliage, museum exhibits, or daily life.	Enchroma USE CASE: Museums, attractions, restaurants, airports CONTACT: Kent Streeb, kent@enchroma.com	Enchroma glasses use patented lens technology that enables visitors with color vision deficiency to see colors. Both indoor and outdoor versions are available.
Making visual information such as audio and ASL described brochures accessible to blind and deaf travelers has been a challenge.	Picture Live USE CASE: DMO visitor guides, museums, attractions. CONTACT: Alain Cloet, alainudprojects@gmail.com	Picture Live converts brochures into multi-sensory experiences so that blind or deaf travelers can the enjoy them via a highly produced audio description incorporating music and live actors.
Many destinations, attractions, hotels and events are not accessible to blind visitors due to the lack of access to accurate information and audio descriptions.	Vacayit USE CASE: Create audio-described itineraries for blind visitors CONTACT: Hailey Brown, founder, Hailey@vacayit.com	Vacayit provides audio guides and accurate accessibility information that provide blind or low-vision visitors, or anyone who likes audio content with a sensory experience.

THE PROBLEM	THE SOLUTION	THE WHY
MOBILITY		
There are 95,000 miles of coastline in the US and conventional wheelchairs are not usable in sand and uneven surfaces.	Mobi-Mat USE CASE: Beach destinations and nature outdoor areas. CONTACT: Greg Scull: greg.scull@mobi-mat-dms.com	Mobi- Mat provides slip-free rollout mats for beaches and uneven surfaces as well as floating wheelchairs for in-water experiences.
ADA wheelchair lifts for 4-5 steps are essential for safety and emergencies, despite their lack of aesthetic appeal and they may not always be needed.	Flex Step USE CASE: hotels/attractions/restaurants CONTACT: Michaela Hayward, North America mha@liftup.us	It's an innovative space saving 2-in-1 solution that functions as a wheelchair lift as well as a short flight of stairs at the push of a button. A classic example of Universal design
Wheelchair users have limited mobility in off-road conditions. Traditional wheelchairs often struggle with uneven terrain, grass, and gravel.	Grit Freedom Chair USE CASE: Outdoor nature trails in all weather conditions CONTACT: Tish Skolnik, founder, tish@gogrit.us	Designed by MIT engineers, GRIT is a mix between a manual wheelchair and a mountain bike that enables wheelchair users to access mountain trails, sandy beaches and even snow.
Many ADA-compliant hotel rooms often resemble assisted living centers or, in worse cases, hospital rooms in terms of their charm and ambiance.	Motionspot USE CASE: Hotels (during renovation or new development) CONTACT: Ed Warner, CEO ed@motionspot.co.uk	Motionspot designs accessible hotel rooms that are both functional and aesthetically pleasing by creating accessible bedrooms and suites that meet ADA regulations without compromising on design.
Some buildings/locations built prior to ADA are grandfathered into an exclusion. They may need an affordable ramp to service guests and meetings.	Roll a Ramp USE CASE: Hotels, attractions that may need a portable ramp CONTACT: Kathy Magness, co-owner : kathy@rollaramp.com	Roll-A-Ramp offers portable, customizable ramps for wheelchair and scooter users. The ramps can be rolled up for easy storage and their length can be adjusted as needed.
People with disabilities need to know if the accessibility features of hotels, attractions and meeting venues fit their needs before they go.	Threshold360 USE CASE: Hotels, attractions, museums, airports, restaurants CONTACT: Seth Lawson, Seth.lawson@threshold360.com	Threshold 360 provides virtual tours for destinations, hotels and attractions, which can not only used by visitors, but also by meeting planners and local residents for weddings and events.
Hotels as well as current online booking platforms do not provide precise information or images about the accessibility of hotel properties.	Wheel the World USE CASE: Site assessments for hotels, attractions, restaurants. CONTACT: Camilo Navarro, Camilo@wheeltheworld.com	WTW is an accessible booking engine that measures 200 data points for hotels that matches disabled travelers with the hotels and tour programs that meet their specific needs.
NEURODIVERSITY		
There's no discreet way to know whether someone with deafness, autism, dementia or any other non-visible disable may need additional support	The Hidden Disability Sunflower Lanyard USE CASE: Airports, museums, attractions, restaurants. CONTACT: Lynn Smith lynn@hdsunflower.com	The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is a symbol for non-visible disabilities and serves as a discreet sign that the wearer may need additional support, help, or a little more time.

LEADING TRAVEL INFLUENCERS AND BLOGGERS

There are many travelers with a disability who blog about their experiences. They offer specific tips to their followers about accessibility friendly destinations, attractions and their travel experiences. Many have large followings in social media. To see their stats and contact information [click here](#).



DISABILITY	BLOGGER	BLOG
B	Ted Tahquech	Blind Travels
B	Sassy Wyatt	Blind Girl Adventures
C	IBCCES	Autism Travel
C	Dina Farmer	Lily and Magnolia Travel
M	John Morris	Wheelchair Travel
M	Cory Lee Woodard	Curb Free with Cory Lee
M	Sylvia Longmire	Spin the Globe
M	Emma Muldoon	Simply Emma
M	Julie Jones	Have Wheelchair Will Travel
M	Jennifer Allen	Wonders Within Reach
M	Candy Harrington	Emerging Horizons
M	Brian	The Abled Traveler
M	Ashley Lynn Olson	Wheelchair Traveling
Prosthetic	Jessica Ping-Wild	The Rolling Explorer
D	Echo Greenlee	Deaf Friendly
C	Alex Stratikis	Autism Adventures Abroad

LEGEND – B: Blindness; C: Cognitive; D: Deafness; M: Mobility

TRAVELABILITY

9 Actions DMOs Can Take to Promote Accessibility

Proactive Actions to Promote Accessibility...and Why

ACTIONS		WHY
1.	Convene a luncheon with local disability advocacy groups—Independent living centers, blind, hearing, autism groups	Get buy-in while uncovering accessible features in your destination...also will assist in identify grant funding
2.	Develop a 3-year Accessibility Strategy that is part of your DE&I plan	Board members and stakeholders find accessibility non-political and a plan makes it easier to find budget support.
3.	Goggle + ChatGPT: “Accessible things to do in...your county/city” as a discovery exercise.	Uncover reviews by bloggers/influencers. Accessibility does not depreciate
4.	Build a Business Case. Assume at least 15% of visitors as well as residents either have a disability or travel with someone with a disability.	Economic impact. as to the market potential of the current traveler as well as the baby boomer that ages into a disability.
5.	Survey your attractions, hotels, tour companies, transportation, medical equipment rentals	Collect data about what is already available that can be added to accessible landing page
6.	Make your landing page easy-to-find on your website. (under “Travel Planning”)	So those visitors (as well as residents) with disabilities will use it.
7.	Recruit ambassador from the disability community to speak at annual tourism partner meeting.	Announce this in a news release to your stakeholders and disability organizations.
8.	Apply for grants and/or state co-op to underwrite assessments and innovations that can enhance accessibility	Accessibility benefits locals as well as visitors. Partnering with local disability orgs may help with grant qualification.
9.	Include People with Disabilities in your advertising/marketing	Travelers relate more to a destination when they see people like themselves.

TRAVELABILITY

7 Actions States Can Take to Promote Accessibility

Proactive Actions to Promote Accessibility...and Why

ACTIONS		WHY
1.	Provide leadership by announcing accessibility as a priority, featuring disability representation in advertising/content and annual tourism conference.	State tourism offices set priorities that DMO partners usually follow.
2.	Determine Economic Impact. According to the CDC, 15% of a state’s visitors AS WELL AS RESIDENTS identify as having a disability. 40% of Baby Boomers self-identify as having a disability after 65.	Building a business case as to the market potential of the current traveler as well as the baby boomer that ages into a disability.
3.	Assess what already exists by researching articles, and blog posts, and influencers written by disabled travelers who visited your state.	Use existing data as a baseline of existing accessibility experiences that can be organized on your website.
4.	Outdoor Experiences from state and national park websites can be combined with existing DMO content landing pages to provide	Positions state website as the center of accessibility information and enables state to create an accessible trail concept.
5.	Help subsidize assessment efforts to uncover accessibility features by DMO’s co-op funds or state grants to fund assessments	Because accessibility benefits locals as well as visitors, DMO’s may qualify for many county grants
6.	Develop a 3-year Accessibility Budget. One rule of thumb is to begin with 1.5% of your non-media budget.	Since Accessibility is NON-POLITICAL, it is one of the few initiatives elected officials can claim to bipartisan about.
7.	Include People with Disabilities in your advertising/marketing.	Travelers relate more to a destination when they see people like themselves.

The Accessibility Playbook is a fundraising initiative of

TRAVELABILITY FOUNDATION

Creative Director/Editor in Chief: Jake Steinman
V.P. Marketing/Editorial: Tricia Roth
Design Director: Rob Schultz

Copyright ©TravelAbility 2023. All rights reserved. Sharing or reproduction of any kind without the expressed written consent of Travelability is prohibited

Acknowledgements:

Center for Disease Control, for conducting the definitive survey of disability in America; **Patty David**, Director of Consumer Insights, AARP, for providing consistent research about baby boomers that helped develop the business case. **Kathleen Harvey**, Manager, Visitor Services, Destination BC, for sharing the helpful tips that were assembled that took their team over one year and \$50k in consulting fees to compile. **Kevin Wright**, VP Marketing, Travel Oregon for inspiring us to develop the playbook. **Magnus Berglund**, former concierge of Scandic Hotels for creating the most useful hotel training videos on the planet. **Eric Lipp**, founder and CEO of the Open Doors Organization for being the first to develop research on accessible travel. Laurent Roffe, CEO, Tapooz Travel, for sharing their hotel general managers accessibility kit. **Meredith Tekin** and **Myron Pincomb** for sharing their tips to help autistic family travelers.

Sponsors:



Thank you to our Destination A11y partners:

