

MAKING EVENTS ACCESSIBLE

Ensure that individuals of all abilities can participate in events by following the suggestions below:

MEETING LOCATION

1. Is there a barrier-free pathway to the meeting space? A barrier-free pathway means that a person with a mobility impairment can make it from the street into the meeting room without encountering stairs, any sudden change in floor height over 1 inch, slippery or unstable ground, doorways less than 32" wide, or any objects obstructing walkways. Any elevators should be large enough to comfortably fit a wheelchair.
2. Are accessible restrooms nearby? An accessible restroom is one that has a stall with a doorway at 32" wide, grab bars installed by the toilet seat, and enough space for a wheelchair to maneuver (at least 36" x 69"). Also, at least one sink should have adequate space open beneath it so that a person using a wheelchair can sit with their legs underneath the basin as they wash their hands.
3. Are nearby accessible parking places available and clearly marked?
4. Is it easy to reach the meeting space from public transportation? Many people with disabilities rely on public transportation.
5. Someone standing by the main entrance to direct people to the meeting room and help those needing assistance is a courtesy that everyone will appreciate.



ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE MEETING ROOM

1. If you know there will be an individual with low vision attending your meeting ask if printed materials in 16-point font would be helpful. For people who are blind, ask if copies of written materials on disk in a generic word processing format would be helpful.
2. Make sure the meeting site is free of background noise for people who are hard of hearing or use hearing aids. →

ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE MEETING ROOM (Cont'd.)

3. Make sure there is a good quality sound system and check audio equipment for loudness and clarity. Are assistive listening devices available?
4. Position presenters so everyone can easily see them, but not in front of windows. If some presenters use wheelchairs, place all speakers at a table in front of the room, passing a table microphone from speaker to speaker.
5. State in your advertisements that “sign language interpreters are available upon request” and then provide them, if requested. Ask participants who are deaf and the interpreter what locations in the room would be best to facilitate signing.

OTHER POINTS

1. When advertising meetings, use access symbols and give contact information to request accommodations.



2. A welcoming attitude is an important component of an accessible meeting. Remain open to requests for accommodations and remember that people with disabilities — like all people — should be treated with dignity and respect.
3. Thinking through and planning for accessibility ahead of time allows people with disabilities to participate more effectively in your meeting.

Source: <http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/practices/17468>