

Planning an Accessible Event at Longwood University

Adapted from The University of Arizona's Information on Planning Accessible Events

“Accessibility is much more than ramps integrated and dispersed seating, curb cuts, assistive listening devices, large print programs, and sign language interpretation. It goes beyond the tangible to a pervasive awareness and a commitment to diversity by the staff and volunteer leadership of the organization.”¹

Longwood University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity in its programs and activities. Our commitment to creating an inclusive campus for people with disabilities includes removing policy, attitudinal, program, and structural barriers and, when necessary, providing reasonable accommodations. These commitments are supported by the University's administration and by federal law².

What is your role?

You will not always know if someone attending your event, program, or meeting, or if someone is attempting to fill out a form on your website has a disability. Therefore, it is important that you consider, plan, and advertise accessibility for all events.

If you are planning an event, program, or meeting:

1. **Start planning early.** Considering access as a part of the design of your program or activity will welcome all participants from the start and reduce surprises and the need to retrofit your event at the last minute (ex. Changing your program when you've planned to show an uncaptioned film and only learn that a person with a hearing impairment will attend the night before the event).
2. **Choose a location that is accessible to people who use wheelchairs and supports the use of possible accommodations.** It is much easier (and more cost-effective) to choose an accessible location rather than trying to make an inaccessible location temporarily accessible. The University does have a portable ramp that can be used

¹ *Beyond the Ramp: Accessibility as An Organizational Asset*, Johanna Misesy Boyer, Association of Performing Arts Presenters, 2005.

² ADA/504 Compliance

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, section 504, no qualified person will be denied access to, participation in, or the benefits of, any program or activity operated by the University because of disability.

in most spaces. Contact the President's Office for more information on reserving the ramp. Most facilities at Longwood University are wheelchair accessible; however, if you're considering a location off campus, you will want to be sure to visit the site to confirm its accessibility.

Items to consider include:

- Availability of accessible parking and an accessible drop-off area
- Accessibility of the primary (main) entrance: Is it level or ramped? Does it either have an accessible door or an automatic door opener?
- Availability of accessible seating for people who use wheelchairs, and seating that allows for companion seating
- Clear signs that direct people with disabilities to accessible areas
- Accessible restrooms and drinking fountains
- Adequacy of lighting and space: Is the space appropriately lighted for its intended use? Is there adequate space for Sign Language interpreters, service animals, and wheelchair maneuverability, etc.?
- Accessibility of outdoor space: Does the path of travel to the location of the event present any barriers? If activities will be held outdoors, does the space provide access for all participants?
- If you want to put accessibility signs on your advertisements, go to <http://www.nsnnet.org/symbols.html> to see some options. You don't have to put these symbols, but see below to see what type of statement you should have on all your event literature

3. **Promote the event as inclusive and include information on how to arrange for accommodations.** Statements about the availability of accommodations are a way of creating a welcoming environment. By encouraging attendees to ask ahead of time for accommodations, you can identify those accommodations early and plan accordingly.

- Please direct all inquiries for accommodations to **your office** or the **office hosting the event**, not to the Accessibility Resources Office. Once you receive a request, you can contact us and we can assist you.
- The following statements are templates for you to include on marketing or informational materials to let people know how they can request accommodations:

- **Events** (To appear on calendars, sports schedules, posters, flyers, and other announcements or advertising for the event):

For questions concerning access or need of accommodations, please contact (insert name and any necessary contact information, including an e-mail)

- **Registration Forms** (To appear on printed and on-line registration materials):

Please describe any disability related accommodations that will facilitate your full participation in this (insert activity/seminar/conference/etc.), such as Sign Language interpreting, Braille, or electronic text, transportation, lodging, dietary requirements, etc.

- **Web Pages**

1. To appear as text on pages if you are not sure of usability:

If any portions of this page are not accessible with adaptive technology, please contact (insert page owner/web master name, e-mail, phone, and TTY if available)

2. To appear as text on pages that contain non-captioned audio content, such as post-event podcasts of featured presenters:

To request the audio material from this site in an alternate format as a disability-related accommodation, please contact the Accessibility Resources Office.

- **Publications** (To appear on catalogs, brochures, pamphlets, and other University publications):

To request this information in an alternate format (Braille, digital, tape, or large print) please contact (insert name and contact information including an e-mail or TTY number)

4. Be prepared to respond to questions. If you receive questions about accommodations or accessibility, and you are unsure of how to respond, gather as much information as possible, including contact information, and assure the person that you will be back in touch as soon as you have more information. You can call the Accessibility Resources Office at ext. 2391 for assistance and guidance.

5. Know your campus resources. The Accessibility Resources Office can assist in a variety of ways. Feel free to call us at ext. 2391.

For Sign Language interpreters or material in alternate format (such as Braille, large print, transcript, or audio) please call Accessibility Resources Office at ext. 2391. Don't be afraid to ask us questions if you are unsure of what to do!

6. Keep accessibility in mind for planned activities and program content. Planning accessible events can sometimes be challenging, but keep these tips in mind.

- Using PowerPoint? Encourage presenters to:
 - Provide you with an electronic and paper copy in case someone needs it in an alternate format, or to provide background information to interpreters
 - Describe visuals in the presentation
 - Design slides with clear, well-sized fonts and appropriate white space
- Prepare to provide captioning or audio-description for visual content
- Plan activities so that all attendees can participate

Additional Resources

Longwood University's Checklist for Planning Accessible Events (required)

<http://www.longwood.edu/accessibility>

Accessible Information Exchange: Meeting on a Level Playing Field

US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Disability Rights Section

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

Planning Accessible Events

George Mason University

<https://accessibility.gmu.edu/campus-access/planning-accessible-events/>

A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People With Disabilities

ADA National Network

<https://adata.org/guide/planning-guide-making-temporary-events-accessible-people-disabilities>

How to Make Presentations Accessible to All

<http://www.w3.org/WAI/training/accessible>

Planning Accessible Meetings and Events Toolkit

Office of Departmental Equal Employment Opportunity (ODEEO)

<https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/ACCESSIBLEMTGTOOLKIT092815.PDF>