Meeting the Needs of People with disAbilities

Community Guide to Accessible Events & Meetings

**Recommendations from Age Friendly Seattle,
an initiative to make Seattle a great place
to grow up AND grow old.**

City of Seattle

Age Friendly SEATTLE

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Aging and Disability Services
Area Agency on Aging for Seattle and King County

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Meeting the Needs of People with disAbilities: Community Guide to Accessible Events & Meetings

Why We Produced This Guide

Disability is a fact of life for tens of thousands of Seattle residents. In every part of our city, people live, work, and play with a range of abilities, including people who are blind or have low vision, deaf or hard of hearing, or challenged by learning disabilities, speech limitations, or mobility barriers.

Age Friendly Seattle produced this guide as part of their commitment to developing a city that is accessible and inclusive of all ages and abilities. By planning and implementing accessible events, meetings, and activities, and effective communications, we help to ensure that all Seattle residents can participate in events and contribute wisdom and talent to their communities with independence, equity, and dignity.

The City of Seattle encourages everyone to participate in its programs and activities, regardless of ability. For accommodations, materials in alternate formats, or accessibility information, contact Age Friendly Seattle (agefriendly@seattle.gov or 206-684-0662 or Relay 711) or visit www.seattle.gov/americans-with-disabilities-act at your earliest opportunity.

Chapter 1: Accessible Events & Meetings

The chapter provides event coordinators, and program planners with information and tools with which to make communications and events accessible to individuals with disabilities. Tools are provided in several ways—embedded links to online resources as well as checklists and supporting documents found in the Appendix.

Planning accessible events does not need to be daunting. The key is to remember your audience:

- Twenty-three percent of King County adults age 18+ self-identify as having a disability.[1]
- Thirty-eight percent of King County residents age 60 and older self-identify as having disabilities.[2]
- At every age, racial and ethnic minorities experience even higher rates of disability.[3]

If your event is truly inclusive of all members of the community, providing accommodations for individuals with disabilities must be a key step in the planning process.

An accessible event will have higher attendance and a broader audience. If your event or meeting is participatory, you will benefit from the perspectives of a broader ranges of ages and abilities.

Good planning can eliminate the need for individual accommodations later. Consider accessibility from the very early stages of your planning process.

Age Friendly Seattle believes that our community is strengthened by providing additional support to ensure that individuals with disabilities and without disabilities have meaningful experiences.

Who is required to provide accommodations to individuals with disabilities?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires state and local governments (Title II) and many businesses and organizations that provide public accommodations and commercial facilities (Title III) to provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

For detailed information, ADA technical assistance manuals are available online:

- Title II: www.ada.gov/taman2.html
- Title III: www.ada.gov/taman3.html

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[1] Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, King County and United States, 2011–2013
[2] Ibid.
[3] American Community Survey (2009–2013 five-year estimates)

Starting Premise

Age Friendly Seattle believes that our community is strengthened by providing additional support to ensure that individuals with disabilities and without disabilities have meaningful experiences.

Age Friendly Seattle subscribes to the seven principles of Universal Design[4], which can be applied to any type of process, including event planning:
1. **Equitable Use**—The event is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
2. **Flexibility in Use**—The event accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. **Simple and Intuitive Use**—The event is easy to understand, regardless of the participant's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
4. **Perceptible Information**—The event communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
5. **Tolerance for Error**—The event minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
6. **Low Physical Effort**—The event can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.
7. **Size and Space for Approach and Use**—Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Event Roles & Responsibilities

One aspect of event planning that is often overlooked is assignment of roles and responsibilities, and requisite staff and/or volunteer training. Since event staff are the "face" of your organization, everyone involved should know how to create a welcoming and enjoyable atmosphere.

When events have co-sponsors, each co-sponsor is equally responsible for ADA compliance. If your organization is co-sponsoring but not leading the planning, be sure to determine in advance who is responsible for receiving request for accommodations and who will pay for auxiliary services, if needed. See the Co-Sponsored Events Checklist and related tools in the Appendix.

Staffing considerations include:
- **Accommodation requests**: It is essential that everyone who takes calls, processes registrations, or receives inquiries from the public knows how to respond to a request for accommodation (see Providing Appropriate Notice later in this chapter).
- **Budget**: Many accommodation requests will involve some expense to your organization. Since the ADA requires that reasonable accommodation be provided, be prepared to take this into consideration when developing the budget for your events.
- **Event setup**: Assign someone to be responsible for assuring that all accommodations (e.g., ASL interpreters, assisted listening devices, large print, or Braille materials) previously requested are available at the event site when participants begin to arrive.
- **Equipment**: Test any special equipment (e.g., assisted listening devices) in advance.

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[4] Universal Design refers to broad-spectrum ideas meant to produce buildings, products, and environments that are inherently accessible to older people, people without disabilities, and people with disabilities. For local information, visit the Northwest Universal Design Council website at www.environmentsforall.org.

- **Sign-in Table**: Have a person near or at the registration or sign-in table to assist anyone needing help in completing necessary paperwork, or in reading event/meeting materials not available in an alternative format. This person should also watch the entrance lines for signs of someone who may need a chair while waiting.
- **All staff**: Alert all staff and volunteers as to where accessible restrooms and accessibility features are located as well as anything that generally requires a visual cue (e.g., location handout or refreshment table, if photos will be taken).

Serious thought should be given to offering "awareness training" for staff and volunteers so they can assist participants effectively. At minimum, all persons involved on the day of the event/meeting should be provided copies of the Etiquette When Working with Individuals who Experience Communication Barriers found in the Appendix.

Site Selection

Typically, we think of public events taking place in large venues, such as school auditoriums, local government facilities, or rented halls. These venues are likely to be accessible for individuals with mobility challenges but may have other accessibility challenges, which this guide will discuss.

Sometimes neighborhood gatherings take place in private homes, condo recreation rooms, or small business venues that may not be accessible. Event planners are strongly encouraged to move to an accessible location. If the event sponsor or any co-sponsor is subject to ADA regulations, an accessible venue is mandatory.

Following are four basic accessibility considerations:
1. **Transit:** Can the venue be reached by transit as well as by car? A reasonable distance is two blocks to a bus stop, if level; less, if the venue is situated on a hill.
2. **Accessible parking:** "Accessible parking" refers to a space that has been properly striped and displays the international symbol of accessibility.
3. **Drop-off and pick-up points:** An accessible facility should have a designated (preferably covered) drop-off and pick-up area (preferably covered) that is clearly marked and readily identifiable by paratransit drivers, personal drivers, and waiting passengers.
4. **Accessible restrooms:** Are restrooms ADA-compliant, with wheelchair-accessible stalls and sink control and paper products within easy reach?

It is always easier to choose a venue that is fully accessible than to hire services and install equipment for a special event. If your venue does not meet the basic requirements above, you should consider moving to a different venue.

For a longer list of accessibility considerations, see Site Visit, below, as well as the Site Accessibility Checklist in the Appendix.

Site Visit
Unless you have visited the site recently to review accessibility, you are encouraged to inspect any proposed event sites prior to scheduling to determine suitability, and then plan for potential accommodations.

Be sure to review the following:

- Ambient noise
- Building access
- Building corridors
- Elevators or ramps between levels
- Entrances
- Lighting
- Outlets
- Pathways
- Restrooms
- Resting places and entrance line seating
- Room setup
- Signage/wayfinding
- Sound system
- Stage or riser
- Water fountains

Additional issues you should consider if your event will take place at an outdoor venue (e.g., public park, stadium, or other open area) include:

- Accessible parking
- Concession areas and stands
- Event access, including wayfinding to event
- Park or stadium entrances
- Pathway slope and surface
- Restrooms (nearby buildings or portable)
- Seating
- Signage at event
- Surface conditions (e.g., muddy or slippery)
- Utilities (e.g., electrical power)

Review the Site Accessibility Checklist found in the Appendix. Make a photocopy to take with on the site visit.

Unique Venues

If your venue is unique and no alternative is available (e.g., dedication of a historic site or remote outdoor area), you can contact the Northwest ADA Center to brainstorm and craft creative solutions. If the City of Seattle is a co-sponsor of your event, you can request an e-mail or phone consultation with the department's ADA coordinator. See also Creating a More Accessible Venue in the Appendix.

Remote Participation

Remote participation is a valuable option, not only for people who may not be physically able to attend the meeting but also people with busy schedules. While using technology during the meeting and finding a meeting space with phone and/or Internet connection may feel like a hassle, the benefits outweigh the costs. Some organizations choose to hold all-remote events (e.g., a telephone town hall meeting or a Twitter or Facebook chat).

Skype is a common service for remote participation—on screen, if a camera is available, or off, like a conference call. If you are not familiar with Skype, help is available via Lynda.com (e.g., "Up and Running with Skype for Business"). Other services are also available.

Scheduling & Inviting Participation

Once you have ensured that your event is physically accessible, you can schedule and invite people to participate.

Timing

Organizations tend to offer programs and events at certain times and days. Stay flexible, and consider availability of accessible public transit options, personal assistants' schedules, and other barriers that make it difficult for individuals with disabilities to get to locations before mid-morning or stay beyond mid-afternoon. People of all abilities can find it difficult to attend during traditional work hours.

To accommodate the constraints of varied daily schedules, it is ideal to host repeat sessions on a range of different days and times so people have choices of when they can attend.

Providing Appropriate Notice

Your event notice should inform your audience—and anyone who wishes to attend—that reasonable accommodations are available upon request. The following language must be printed at the bottom of all information disseminated to publicize your event/meeting, including registration materials:

- **Standard**: "[organization name] encourages everyone to participate. For accommodations or accessibility information, contact [name | phone | e-mail] or visit [URL]."
- **Where space is limited**: "For accommodations or accessibility information, contact [name | phone | e-mail] or visit [URL]."
- **Where space is not a concern (e.g., reports and other documents)**: "[organization name] encourages everyone to participate in its programs and activities, regardless of ability. For accommodations, materials in alternate formats, or accessibility information, contact [name | phone | e-mail] or visit [URL] at your earliest opportunity."

Many people experience unpleasant physical effects from scented products and fragrances that attach to clothing and skin—reactions that can be strong and disabling. Consider adopting a fragrance policy that event notice. Following is a draft policy similar to one adopted by the U.S. Access Board:

- Event notices shall include: "Persons attending [organization] events are requested to refrain from using perfume, cologne, and other fragrances for the comfort of other participants."
- Signs will be posted outside meeting rooms reminding persons attending the meeting to refrain from using fragrances.
- Facilities where [organization]-sponsored events will be held will be requested to remove or disconnect any fragrance-emitting devices from the meeting rooms and adjoining restrooms, and not to schedule any remodeling activities (e.g., painting, wallpapering) or shampoo carpets or apply pesticides prior to [organization] meetings.

Registration

If your event requires completion of a registration form in advance, space should be provided on the form to allow participants to request their desired accommodation. Remember to make the registration form itself—whether print, digital, or online—accessible to individuals who are blind or have low vision. Use accessibility checkers available with your software. To check PDF accessibility, use Adobe Acrobat DC Pro.

In MS Office software, follow this path to check Accessibility: File > Info > Check for Issues > Check Accessibility

Online applications such as Survey Monkey and Eventbrite appear to be accessible by digital screen reader when you follow the company's guidelines. If you use these or other programs to create an

online registration form, ask someone who uses a screen reader or voice-activated software to test it for you.

When participants arrive at a public event, they are usually invited to sign in, which can be challenging for people who cannot hold a pen or see well. If you asked for pre-registration, you can print names of people you expect to attend. Participants can initial the list to indicate their attendance. This is easier and faster for people of all abilities. See additional tips for registration table staff under Event Roles & Responsibilities, above.

Outreach

Keep in mind that most residents with disabilities do not receive services related to disability and may not be affiliated with a disability advocacy organization. When you include notice that indicates you will provide accommodations and can answer questions about accessibility, you are indicating your interest in serving all Seattle residents, regardless of ability.

Most residents with disabilities do not receive services related to disability and may not be affiliated with a disability advocacy organization. Your accommodations/ accessibility notice indicates your interest in serving all residents, regardless of ability.

Program Planning

A fully accessible event or meeting requires advance planning and may require training.

Program Activities

Some events include activities such as breakout sessions, tabling, wall voting, question-and-answer sessions, and short events (indoors or outdoors) that may not be fully accessible. Plan your program carefully, considering whether guests with mobility challenges will be able to be able to participate.

Presenters

Provide your presenters with two handouts from the Appendix:

- Tips for Presenters
- Etiquette When Working with Individuals who Experience Communication Barriers

If you have not worked with your presenter before, inquire whether they need an accommodation in order to participate (e.g., a ramp, if there is a riser or stage).

Additional tips are available via the Commission for People with disAbilities (Seattle Office for Civil Rights).

Script Preparation

When preparing speaking points—for yourself or someone else—remember that a good oral presentation using PowerPoint includes "captioned" photos and images—words that reflect the visual

elements for audience members who cannot see the content of the screen. Those images and their descriptions should be meaningful. In other words, don't just decorate a PowerPoint presentation—includes photos and images that support the presentation in a meaningful way, and explain the relevance in the spoken word.

Event setup

Entrance Lines
If long lines are anticipated, consider alternate ways to register and/or provide seating to individuals with mobility barriers or other conditions that make standing difficult.

Room Setup
It is important to consider the line of sight for participants who are deaf or hard of hearing. Whenever possible, participants should receive priority seating where they can see the speaker's face, the presentation screen, and the ASL interpreter and/or CART[5] caption screen, as appropriate.

If the room has windows, consider whether it is necessary to provide a dark screen behind the ASL interpreters and/or CART caption screen (or re-position to avoid glare or light saturation).

If there are break-out sessions or table discussions, individuals who require auxiliary aids or services should be accommodated in their choice of room or table (i.e., ideally, not requested to sit with others who require the same accommodation).

It is preferable if accessible seating is not limited to one area. Individuals with disabilities prefer to have choice in seating, like everyone else.

Seating
A variety of seating options may be needed for full accessibility. Considerations include larger chairs (e.g., extra-wide chairs, chairs with backs and/or arm rests)

Individuals who depend on lip reading require seating near the presenter, with sufficient light on the presenter's face.

For additional room setup ideas, visit Creating a More Accessible Venue in the Appendix.

Public Meeting Accommodations

Following is a list of commonly requested auxiliary aids and services:
- Accessible digital communications
- Assistive listening devices
- Assistive listening systems
- Audio recordings
- Braille materials

- Captioning
- Computer-aided transcription services
- Large print materials
- Notetakers
- Qualified ASL interpreters

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[5] CART—Communication Access Real Time translation—is described in more detail in the Accommodations portion of this document.

- Qualified readers
- Qualified tactile interpreters
- Telecommunications relay service (711)
- Written materials

ASL & Tactile Interpretation

American Sign Language (ASL) and tactile interpretation is available through a number of local vendors. Lists of interpreters are available online via a search engine and are also listed on the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services website. The Northwest ADA Center may have lists, too.

ASL and tactile interpreters are in a high demand and need to be retained as early as possible. Even two weeks' lead time may be insufficient. Be sure you know at least two different vendors for ASL and tactile interpretation services prior to receiving a request.

Note that two interpreters are usually required for any meeting. Also, remember to request additional pairs of interpreters for breakout sessions or small group discussions.

Event coordinators should consider requesting interpretation services as soon as an event date, time, and place is determined.

If promotional materials state that ASL interpretation is available, coordinators do not need to receive additional requests for ASL accommodation; however, you may wish to continue receiving requests in order to arrange preferred seating. In general, there is no limit to the number of audience members that ASL interpreters can accommodate.

Assisted Listening Devices

Assisted Listening Devices (ALDs) should be made available for any participant upon request. Some of the most common ALDs include:
- FM, infrared, or bluetooth receivers/amplifiers-- transmit and/or amplify from the sound system
- Hearing loop—some event spaces are equipped with an induction loop system that transmit magnetic energy to telecoil (T-coil) equipped hearing aides through a wire that surround an audience. For more information, visit hearingloop.org.
- Counter loop—a portable system that emits a signal to T-coil equipped devices within a short range (about 3'). These may be useful in larger venues in combination with T-coil equipped receivers/amplifiers.

Remember to test all equipment well in advance of using them at an event, and then test them again in the event space. Noise and magnetic interference can render ALDs useless.

Braille

Individuals who read Braille may request promotional materials (e.g., the event flyer), agendas and/or handouts in Braille.

Short documents can be translated to Braille by the Seattle Public Library Equal Access Program—LEAP (206-615-1380 or leap@spl.org) at no cost. Longer documents can be translated to Braille by on the of the following organizations (there may be a charge):
- Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (206-615-0400 or wtbbl@wtbbl.org)
- Washington State School for the Blind (Vancouver, WA)—contact the Braille Services Team at 360-947-3340 or 360-947-3344.

CART Captioning

CART is an acronym for Communication Access Real-time Transcription (sometimes the T stands for Translation). It is sometimes referred to as real-time captioning or live captioning (as opposed to recorded or broadcast captioning). A trained court reporter, using a steno machine and specialized software, listens to an event or meeting and creates an instant transcript of what is said. This can be done onsite with a live CART writer (captioner) or remotely with a conference phone or other audio connection for the CART writer to hear the event, and an internet connection for the user to receive the captions.

Photos on this page show presenters using two screens—one for their presentation slidedeck, the other for verbatim captioning, as transcribed by a CART writer.

CART caption screens should be portable (e.g., manual tripod or pull-up projection screens, not fixed mount), allowing flexible and optimal placement. The CART caption screen should be as close to the presenter as possible so that lip-readers can watch and read without much head and neck movement. Neither screen should not be placed behind the presenter.
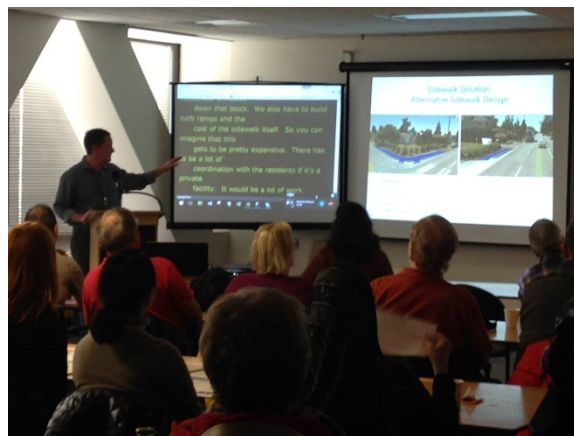
Remember to schedule additional CART writers for breakout sessions or small group discussions.

Microphones and Sound Systems

Use of a sound system is a fundamental accommodation for people who struggle to hear. Whenever possible, use amplification. Ensure that every presenter is comfortable holding the mic close to his or her mouth for the best sound quality. Schedule early arrival so that presenters can become familiar with the microphone(s) they will use.

Ensure that audience questions are also spoken into a microphone. Ask audience members to wait for the mic before speaking.

Effective microphone use includes pausing when turning one's head (e.g., to view a PowerPoint slide or something happening off to the side). If wearing a lavalier (lapel) mic, remind presenters not to turn away.

Exclusions

If an attendee with a disability needs assistance, provide help but remember that staff and volunteers are not required to do personal chores (e.g., feeding, toileting).

Service Animals

Service animals are permitted to accompany their handlers anywhere members of the public have been invited. Two basic rules to remember:

- You *may* ask a service animal owner what service their animal is trained to provide.
- You may *not* ask, "What is your disability?"

Although not required by the ADA, at longer events, event planners may wish to identify a source of drinking water for service animals and an outdoor relief area with nearby trashcan as a customer service measure.

For more information about service animals, visit the following sites:

- www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm
- www.nwadacenter.org/toolkit/service-animals

Chapter 2: Effective Communications

It is important to ensure that the materials you develop are accessible by individuals with communication barriers. The ADA requires that we take steps to ensure that our communications with people with disabilities are as effective and meaningful as communications with people without disabilities.

Accessible digital communications

The University of Washington (www.washington.edu/accessibility/documents/) provides clear instructions for creation of accessible digital communications—including information that can be accessed by electronic screen readers—including:

- E-mail messages
- Word documents
- PDFs
- Fixing inaccessible PDFs

Per the U.S. Department of Justice, to meet ADA requirements, all digital communications must comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA standards.

Age- and disability-friendly print communications

The best rule of thumb for print communications is "keep it simple." In print communications, less means more.

- Use matte (non-reflective) paper to reduce glare.
- Use 12 point type or larger (18-point for people with vision impairment).
- Use easy-to-read sans serif fonts such as Arial, Verdana, Tahoma, or Tw Cen MT.
- Limit fonts to one or two.
- Use wide margins and ample space between lines.
- Left-justify text.
- Use simple sentence case for general text.
- Reserve Title Case for headlines.
- Avoid *italics*, **bold**, ALL CAPS, and underlining—all are difficult for older readers to see.
- Include commonly-understood symbols and illustrations.
- Ensure high contrast between paper and ink color. If in doubt, check contrast and get suggestions for improvements using a free online using Contrast Checker.
- Use a spiral or ring binder for booklets, making it easier to turn pages.

Alternative formats

You may receive requests to provide promotional materials, agendas, presentations and/or handouts in a different format. This may include:

- Braille
- Large print
- Audio recording
- Digital version

When an event is expected to attract a large number of people, there is greater likelihood that large print materials will be need. Prepare several sets of materials in large print (18-point or larger type size).

Plain language

Several years ago, the federal government developed plain language guidelines that work. Among many recommendations available at PlainLanguage.gov:
- Write for your audience.
- Write useful headings.
- Write short sentences.
- Use active verbs.
- Use short, simple words.
- Avoid acronyms and both bureaucratic and trendy jargon. If you must use acronyms or jargon, provide an easy reference sheet.

Accommodations

See Public Meeting Accommodations in the Appendix for information about auxiliary aids and devices.

Conclusion

Our intent in preparing this guide has been to provide information and tools you need to ensure that community members with disabilities receive the consideration and support they need to enjoy meaningful participation in events, meetings, or processes.

While this document does not respond to every situation that may arise, an effort has been made to address the most common issues and situations.

Contact

Age Friendly Seattle
agefriendly@seattle.gov
www.seattle.gov/agefriendly

Appendix

Site Accessibility Checklist

Use this checklist to evaluate basic accessibility in an unfamiliar venue. Take a photocopy with you on your site visit.

Venue: _____

Event: _____

Name of Room: _____

Address: _____

Contact: _____

Phone: _____

Have you taken photos for future reference? Exterior ❑ Yes ❑ No   Interior ❑ Yes ❑ No

Venue/Facility Access

Have you considered?	Yes	No
Are parking spaces near main facility/venue entrance?	☐	☐
Is there one accessible/disabled parking space for every 25 parking spaces?	☐	☐
Is there a "drop off" zone at facility/venue entrance?	☐	☐
Is there a step-free route from the parking lot to the building entrance?	☐	☐
Is the venue/facility entrance doorway at least 32" wide?	☐	☐
Is the slope from parking to building entrance 1:12 or less?	☐	☐
If the wheelchair accessible entrance is not the primary entrance, is there a sign on the primary entrance directing persons to the accessible entrance?	☐	☐
Do doors have lever handles or pressure plates?	☐	☐
Is the door easy to open? Or should staff be assigned to open and close doors?	☐	☐
Are other than revolving doors available?	☐	☐
Is path of travel free of obstruction and wide enough for a wheelchair (36"+)?	☐	☐
Is floor surface hard and not slippery?	☐	☐
If the floor is carpeted, is it firm (not heavily cushioned)?	☐	☐
Do obstacles (e.g., phones, fountains) protrude no more than four inches?	☐	☐
Are elevator controls low enough to be reached from a wheelchair?	☐	☐
Are elevator markings in Braille for the blind?	☐	☐
Does elevator provide audible signals for the blind?	☐	☐
Does elevator interior provide a turning area 51" deep for wheelchairs?	☐	☐
Are restrooms near facility/venue entrance?	☐	☐
Are restrooms identified in Braille?	☐	☐
Do conference room doors have Braille signs?	☐	☐
Do doors have lever handles?	☐	☐
Are doors at least 32" wide?	☐	☐

Have you considered?	Yes	No
Are grab bars provided in toilet stalls?	☐	☐
Are sinks at least 30" high with room for a wheelchair to roll under?	☐	☐
Are sink handles easily reached and used?	☐	☐
Are soap and towel dispensers, no more than 48" from floor?	☐	☐
Are drinking water accessible?	☐	☐

Creating a More Accessible Venue

It is always easier to choose a venue that is fully accessible than to hire services and install equipment for a special event; however, some non-traditional venues may be worth considering. And even in fully accessible venues, some of the following ideas may allow for greater participation.

Have you considered?	Yes	No
Providing an accessible shuttle service to a venue, if there is no accessible public transit?	☐	☐
Providing wheelchairs for loan to allow mobility for people who become fatigued?	☐	☐
Renting a portable ramp, wo people who use mobility aids can enter and move around the venue?	☐	☐
Renting an accessible toilet if the venue does not provide one?	☐	☐
Allowing clear pathways around tables and display boards?	☐	☐
Allowing adequate spaces throughout the seating area to allow for wheelchair seating and use of other mobility aides?	☐	☐
Especially for large events, developing an accessibility or mobility map that indicates accessible parking, toilets, paths, and attractions?	☐	☐
Providing signage in large print and high-contrast colors to identify rest rooms, exits, and activity areas?	☐	☐
Rest areas where participants can retreat from noise and/or extreme weather?	☐	☐
Providing a range of food and drink options?	☐	☐
Providing water for service animals?	☐	☐

Co-Sponsored Events Checklist

Organizations that are committed to developing an accessible and inclusive community that welcomes individuals with disabilities and ensures that they can participate in a meaningful way are encouraged to consider the following questions early in the planning process.

Accessibility Considerations	Yes	No
Have you discussed responsibility for ADA accommodations with the lead event planner or planning team?	☐	☐
Does every member of the planning team know who is responsible, and how to contact that person?	☐	☐
Does the person responsible for ADA accommodations know how to make arrangements for auxiliary aids and services?	☐	☐
Do you know which organization is responsible for paying for auxiliary services such as ASL interpretation and CART captioning?	☐	☐
What accommodation statement will appear on promotional materials (e.g., event flyer, poster, webpage)?	☐	☐
Will promotional materials include a statement about maintaining a fragrance-free environment?	☐	☐
Whose name and contact information will be used in the accommodation statements?	☐	☐
If breakout sessions or table discussions will take place, how will individuals with disabilities receive accommodations?	☐	☐
Have you provided the Site Accessibility Checklist (available in the Appendix) to the lead event organizer?	☐	☐
Have you provided Tips for Presenters (available in the Appendix) to the lead event organizer?	☐	☐

Event Logistics Worksheet

Name of event: _____
Date: _____
Time: _____

Sponsors
Lead sponsor: _____
Co-sponsors: _____

Location
Venue Name: _____
Address: _____
Time booked for event: from _____ AM/PM to _____ AM/PM
Venue contact: _____
Rental Fees—amount: _____ due by: _____ paid by: _____

Is this location ADA accessible? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If no, what steps will be taken to make the location accessible? _____

Accommodations
Who is responsible for accommodations? _____
Do all sponsors and planners know? ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ American Sign Language (provider: _____)
☐ Assisted listening devices (detail: _____)
☐ CART captioning—live ☐ remote ☐ (provider: _____)
☐ Materials in alternative formats (produced by: _____)
☐ Reserved seating (signs produced by: _____)
☐ Other—specify: _____

IT Needs
☐ Projector   ☐ Sound system
☐ Screen   No. of mics: _____ Handheld: _____ Lavalier/lapel _____
☐ Timer   Mic stands: _____ Amplifers: _____ Speakers: _____
☐ Video   ☐ Skype/sound system connection—cord/jack: _____ mic: _____

Staffing Roles & Resonsibilities
☐ Emcee: _____
☐ Staff sign-in table: _____
☐ Assist guests with interpreters: _____
☐ Assist guests with assisted listening devices: _____
☐ Time keeper: _____

Event Logistics Checklist

Presentation or Program

Agenda created: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable
Other materials created: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable
Are materials accessible? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If no, what steps will be taken to make materials accessible? _____

☐ Presenters received Tips for Presenters and Etiquette handouts
☐ Powerpoint created or received from presenters
☐ Script includes descriptions of visible elements

Communications & Outreach

☐ Advertising—date: _____ responsibility: _____)
☐ Calendars—date: _____ responsibility: _____)
☐ Co-sponsor communications—date: _____ responsibility: _____)
☐ Listservs and other e-mail—date: _____ responsibility: _____)
☐ Media advisory—date: _____ responsibility: _____)
☐ Promotional flyer—date: _____ responsibility: _____)
☐ Seattle Channel advisory—date: _____ responsibility: _____)
☐ Social media—date: _____ responsibility: _____)
☐ Website—date: _____ responsibility: _____)

All promotional information includes accommodations information: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Supplies

☐ Easels—quantity: _____   ☐ Markers—quantity: _____
☐ Materials for exhibit table—quantity: _____
☐ Name tags for staff—quantity: _____
☐ Notepads—quantity: _____   ☐ Pens—quantity: _____
☐ Sign-in sheets: _____ RSVPs _____ Blank

☐ Signs:
    ☐ Directions/arrows—quantity: _____   ☐ Interpreter—quantity: _____
    ☐ "Sign in here"   ☐ Table tents for presenters
    ☐ Assisted listening devices   ☐ Table tents for tables
    ☐ Bathroom—quantity: _____

☐ Tables—quantity: _____   ☐ Chairs—quantity: _____

Refreshments

Type of refreshments: _____
Vendor: _____
Requested delivery time: _____
Projected cost: _____
Payment needed by: _____

Event Logistics Checklist

Tips for Presenters

Our organization is committed to developing an accessible and inclusive community that welcomes individuals with disabilities. Effective communications at events and meetings helps to ensure that all residents can participate in a meaningful way. Following are speaking tips for your consideration.

Speaking Voice
- Slow your rate of speech, for three reasons:
    1. Interpreters and caption writers can capture all your words
    2. Lip-readers have time to absorb all the information, especially if they need to turn their heads to see a screen, too.
    3. People absorb information at different rates.

Microphone Use
- If a sound system is available, use it. Hold the microphone close to your mouth, just under your nose, and as parallel to the floor as possible.
- Require that audience members speak into a microphone when asking questions. Remind them to wait for the mic.

Movement
- Avoid gesturing to illustrate a point such as visual points of reference (e.g., "If you'll notice over here …" or "If you compare this figure with that one… .")
- Avoid unnecessary pacing (movement across your "stage" area).
- Avoid speaking while writing on a board or flipchart, or when turning to check a visual aid such as a Powerpoint screen. Face your audience as much as possible.

Presentation & Script
- Describe all visual material in detail for people who are blind or have low vision. If working from a script, add visual descriptions in advance.
- If you use sound elements, be sure to describe the sounds for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- During question-and-answer sessions, allow for both voice and movement response—not everyone can raise their hands.

For future presentations:
- Provide new vocabulary in advance—in print, on a flipchart, or projected on a screen. This helps someone who depends on lipreading to follow the presentation.
- Consider bringing non-fragile objects that the blind can pick up, hold, and touch.
- Consider using background music, film, diagrams, and posters to set a tone and/or help describe a visual element, if it is appropriate to the presentation topic.

Etiquette Regarding Specific Communication Challenges

The most important thing to remember in any conversation with someone with a disability is "assume nothing!" If you have a question about what to do, what language or terminology to use, what assistance, if any, they might need, the person with the disability should be your first and best resource. Do not be afraid to ask.

Be patient, not only with the person with the disability, but with yourself. Frustration may come from both sides of the conversation and needs to be understood and dealt with by both parties.
The most important thing to focus on during conversation with persons with disabilities is the overall goal. It is simply communication between two individuals. Ultimately, it is what is communicated, not how it is communicated.

The following summary contains many true statements, but no absolute truths. Every person with a disability is an individual. Remember that you are not working with disabilities, you are working with individuals who may have a disability.

Blind or Low Vision

Things to Know:
- Most persons who are legally blind have some sight.
- Most persons who are blind are mobile and independent.
- While many persons who are blind can use Braille, the majority of persons who are blind do not.

Things to Do:
- Introduce yourself. Identify who you are and what your job or role is. Give the person verbal information that is visually obvious to those who can see.
- Be descriptive when giving directions. For instance, saying, "Over there," has little meaning to someone who cannot see you point. Saying "Four doors after turning right from the elevator" would be more helpful.
- Always ask someone if they need your assistance and how you can assist them.
- Lead someone who is blind only after they have accepted your offer to do so. Allow them to hold your arm rather than you holding theirs. It is important that they control their own movements.
- Many techniques are used as tools for independence. Some persons who are blind use a "clock" reference for things directly in front of them such as a meal. For example, something could be positioned at three o'clock (to their right) or six o'clock (directly in front and close). Before using this technique, ask the person if this is useful.
- Remember to describe things from their perspective, not yours.

Things to Avoid:
- DO NOT move any items (i.e., furniture, personal items) without informing the person who is blind. Doing so can be frustrating and, in some cases, dangerous for the person.
- DO NOT use references that are visually-oriented, such as: "Over there near the green plant."
- DO NOT interact with a service animal while it is working (in harness), without permission.

Deaf or Hard-Of-Hearing

Things to Know:
- Most persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing have some hearing.
- Sign language is not another form of English. It is a language with its own grammar, context, and rules.
- The majority of people who have hearing loss do NOT use American Sign Language.
- Lip-reading, while helpful without sound clues, is only about 30 percent effective.
- Long conversations with persons who lip-read can be very fatiguing.
- Not all persons who are deaf can lip-read.
- Persons who are deaf may choose not to speak, or may not be able to speak.
- Do not be surprised to receive a non-verbal communication (e.g., a question or statement in writing or voice via a computer app).
- An ASL interpreter, if present, can voice questions or comments for an individual who uses sign language.

Things to Do:
- Determine how the person prefers to communicate.
- If the person uses an interpreter, address the person directly, not the interpreter.
- If the person reads lips, speak in a normal not exaggerated way. Short, simple sentences are best.
- If the person reads lips, avoid blocking their view of your face. Even facial hair can make lipreading difficult.
- Make sure the lighting is good.
- Gain their attention before starting a conversation.
- If you believe you may have been misunderstood, ask if they understand you.
- Be aware of situations where a person may be waiting for assistance (i.e., transportation, a table, the start of an activity), where the common method of communication is by announcement or the calling of the person's name. Develop an alternative method for notifying the deaf and/or hard-of-hearing person.
- Have a notepad, flipchart, or whiteboard (and markers) available.

Things to Avoid:
- DO NOT become impatient or exasperated with the person if it takes additional time to communicate.
- Make sure there are no physical barriers to effective communication.
- If the person is using hearing aids, avoid conversations in large, open and/or noisy surroundings.

Mobility Challenges

Things to Know:
- There are many reasons (not just paralysis) why someone uses a wheelchair, scooters, canes, leg braces, walkers, or other assistive devices.
- There is a wide range of physical abilities among those who use mobility devices. Persons using them may require different degrees of assistance or no assistance at all.
- Some people do not use one type of device exclusively, but may walk or use other devices for short periods.

Etiquette Regarding Specific Communication Challenges

- All wheelchairs are not the same. Some are manually operated and others are motorized. Different sizes and shapes meet different needs.

Things to Do:
- If you are requested to fold, carry, or store a wheelchair, treat it with care. They can break, and are difficult to repair on short notice. It is extremely disruptive to the user if their wheelchair is unavailable.
- When speaking to someone who uses a wheelchair, give the person a comfortable viewing angle of your face. Get down on their level whenever possible (e.g., sit in a chair). Having to look straight up is not a comfortable viewing angle.

Things to Avoid:
- DO NOT push someone using a wheelchair without permission.
- When communicating, do not stand too close to the person in the wheelchair. Give him/her some space.

Speech Limitations

Things to Know:
- There are many causes for persons having speech limitations. Deafness, cerebral palsy, stroke, head injury, and general speech impairment are just a few.
- It is not unusual in stressful situations for a person's speech to become harder to understand.

Things to Do:
- If you do not understand what the person is saying, bring it to his/her attention immediately and ask how the two of you may better communicate.
- If the situation is stressful, try to stay calm.
- If you are in a public area with many distractions, move to a quiet or private location.
- Consider writing as an alternative means of communication.
- Double-check that there is two-way understanding.

Things to Avoid:
- DO NOT pretend to understand them if you do not.
- DO NOT become impatient with the communication difficulty.
- DO NOT finish the person's sentences or interrupt.