

Accessible Event Planning Guide

Planning Accessible Events for People Who Have Physical Disabilities

When planning events on or off campus, the following must be considered:

Is the facility (building, theater, stadium, etc.) accessible to a person who uses a wheelchair?

- Have you publicized that your event will be accessible for people who have mobility impairments?
- Have you include the international access logo shown below at the bottom right hand corner of your advertisement?
- Is the facility entered on ground level or ramped?
- Are outside doors able to be used independently by persons using a wheelchair or having some other mobility impairment?
- If the main entrance is not accessible, is signage showing alternate access available?

Once inside, are all the floors accessible to wheelchair users, persons with mobility impairments or persons who are blind or have visual impairments?

- Is there an elevator to all floors?
- Are the elevators marked with Braille or raised letters?
- Is there dispersed wheelchair seating or unobstructed view seating?

Are there men's and women's restrooms close to the meeting area?

- Are entrance doors wide enough for wheelchair users? The proper width is **32** inches.
- Are sinks, mirrors and paper towel dispensers accessible?
- Are there wheelchair accessible stalls?

Is disabled parking available?

- Are spaces marked with the HP symbol?
- Are spaces close to the main entrance?

If transportation is being provided, have accommodations been made for wheelchair users?

- Have you scheduled wheelchair accessible buses or vans?

Are food areas wheelchair accessible?

- Are buffet areas, bars and seating tables accessible to wheelchair users?

For questions and assistance with issues related to Physical accessibility:

Facility: Contact Facilities Management at 559.278.2373

Parking & Transportation: Contact Traffic Operations at 559.278.2950

Planning College Events for People Who Are Deaf and Hard Of Hearing

Deaf and hard of hearing persons use varied modes of communication. Please be sure to make the most appropriate accommodation.

Have you arranged for an interpreter to be present at your event?

-Have you publicized that interpreters will be provided at your event by placing the interpreting logo shown below at the bottom right hand corner of your advertisement?

-For questions and assistance with issues related to Deaf & hard of hearing services:

- To request a sign language interpreter or real time captionist for your on-campus event (at least 5 days in advance) use the on-line “Request for Interpreter or RTC” form located on the Services for Students website under FORMS: <http://www.fresnostate.edu/studentaffairs/ssd/forms/> ; Charge back cost for an interpreter is \$45/hr. If event is over 1-hour, two interpreters will be required to team. RTC is \$60/hr.

Or

Contact local Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHSC) and request an interpreter directly by submitting an on-line request at http://www.dhhsc.org/?page_id=31. DHHSC is set-up as a campus vendor for billing purposes. Costs start at \$60.00/hr.

- For information on how to work with sign language Interpreters: Contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 278.2811.

Is your event visually accessible for Deaf and hard of hearing attendees?

-Have you reserved a section at the front of the audience for Deaf and hard of hearing people?

-If slides or overheads are used, will there be an alternate light source (i.e. spotlight) so that the interpreter will remain visible?

-Is there an appropriate backdrop? Visually distracting patterns and backlighting must be avoided. For the background, a blue curtain would work well.

-Have you provided space for the interpreter(s) on the stage next to the speaker, as well as extra seating, if necessary, as near to the presenter as possible?

Are you familiar with the interpreting process?

-At any event or meeting with multiple participants, it is important to regulate turn-taking behavior so that only one participant is speaking at a time. It is impossible to accurately interpret more than one remark at a time.

-Be sure to give the Deaf participants any printed materials before the start of the presentation. It is not possible to watch the interpreter and read through distributed documents at the same time.

Have you arranged for other assistive equipment that may be required?

Contact the facilities Coordinator where your event is scheduled to see what is available. See FAQs below for more information or contact the Assistive Technology Coordinator at SSD for technical assistance.

Planning College Events for Persons Who Are Blind or Have a Visual Impairment

Is your event accessible for persons with visual impairments?

- Have you reserved a section at the front of the audience seating for people who are blind or have a visual impairment?
- If slides or overheads are to be used, will they be made available in alternative format to people who are blind or have a visual impairment?

Have you arranged for handouts, surveys, programs, etc. to be put in alternative formats?

- Braille
- Large Print
- Flash Drive

Are you aware that blind people sometimes use a guide dog and that the guide dogs must be allowed into the function?

Other service dogs include hearing dogs for the Deaf and hard of hearing, assistance dogs for wheelchair users and other people with mobility impairments, and dogs for those with hidden disabilities.

For further information refer to the POLICY ON THE USE OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: 20.0 ANIMALS ON CAMPUS found on the facilities management website.

<http://www.fresnostate.edu/adminserv/facilitiesmanagement/grounds/>

If materials/forms are to be filled out at the event are there readers and/or scribes available to assist?

For questions and assistance with issues related to visibility disabilities:

- Creating Alternate Format of materials: For Professional Development of Accessible Technology in the CSU, <http://teachingcommons.cdl.edu/access/>
- For other questions, contact SSD.

Planning College Events for Persons Who Have a Learning Disability

Is your event accessible for persons with learning disabilities?

- If slides or overheads are to be used, will they be made available in alternative formats for people who have a learning disability?

Have you arranged for handouts, surveys, programs, etc. to be put in alternative formats?

- Flash drive for use with audio player or other device.

If materials/forms are to be filled out at the event, are readers and/or scribes available (see resource information noted above)?

For questions and assistance with issues related to learning problems: Contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 278.2811.

Access Symbols for Advertisements



International Symbol of Accessibility:

The wheelchair symbol should only be used to indicate access for individuals with limited mobility, including wheelchair users. For example, the symbol is used to indicate an accessible entrance, bathroom or telephone that is lowered for a wheelchair user.

Any language accompanying these symbols should focus on the accommodation or service, not on the individual who uses it. For example, "Ramped Entrance" may accompany the wheelchair symbol. This is important not only for individuals who use wheelchairs, but also for people with baby carriages, luggage, etc.



Sign Language Interpreted: Symbol to indicate Sign Language Interpreter Available

Frequently Asked Questions

How much notice does a participant with a disability have to provide to be entitled to an accommodation?

There is no "cutoff" point after which the event sponsor has no obligation to provide an accommodation due to short notice. An event sponsor is required to make a good faith effort to timely provide an appropriate accommodation upon request. What is considered a reasonable accommodation depends in part with the amount of time to secure the accommodation the event sponsor has been given. At the earliest stages of planning an event, a sponsor should consider how the organization intends to respond upon receiving a request for commonly requested accommodations, e.g., interpreters, captioning, wheelchair access, etc. On the other hand, requests for accommodation made only a few days before an event may mean that no qualified interpreters/captioners are available. Whenever an event sponsor becomes aware that the organization is going to be unable, for any reason, to satisfactorily respond to a request for accommodation to a University event, the event sponsor should immediately notify the Department of Human Resources at 559.278.2032.

We haven't received any accommodation requests yet for our event. Am I legally required to provide an accommodation (e.g., interpreters, wheelchair access, etc.) in the absence of a request from a specific individual with a disability?

Although in general the duty to be accessible is triggered by an actual person with a disability making a request for accommodation, the larger the number of folks expected to attend an event, the stronger the legal presumption that the event sponsor has planned in advance upon the possibility that such a request will be received and there is an expectation that the sponsor is "ready to go" when such a request for accommodation is received, even on short notice. It is therefore especially important that, even before an actual request for accommodation from an individual is received, the sponsor of a University event develop a plan for how to provide accommodations (e.g., to someone who is Deaf) with respect to an event held in one of the campuses large facilities. Thus, whenever possible public events should not be scheduled at a location that is not wheelchair accessible. Please note that public events scheduled to be held in facilities that are not wheelchair accessible are required to have an alternate wheelchair accessible location in mind should a request for wheelchair access be made.

Should I just go ahead and book ASL interpreters for my event? Better safe than sorry, right?

Individuals who are Deaf or have other hearing impairments (i.e., hard-of-hearing, oral) may need a different kind of accommodation. Not all Deaf persons are fluent in sign language, so it cannot be assumed that simply providing an American Sign Language interpreter will be an appropriate accommodation for everyone. Therefore, there are many reasons that knowledgeable sponsors wait to actually receive a request for accommodation before committing to a specific approach to accommodation. Specifically, many in the disability community look with disfavor on generically just having sign language interpreters hired to sign to an "empty seat" if no Deaf individuals have indicated they plan to attend. In addition, hiring interpreters when there may not be Deaf people in attendance can end up tying up a scarce resource (interpreters) and keeping others from engaging interpreters in situations where a Deaf person actually will be in attendance. In the absence of a specific request, it may be more effective to secure real-time captioning for your event. If you end up making accommodation

arrangements without a request from an individual with a disability, take extra steps to let those in the Fresno State and local Deaf communities know that this accommodation is definitely being offered. In this way, they may be more encouraged to attend, and you will have made the most of the accommodation resource.

Who pays the cost of disability accommodations at extracurricular events?

The sponsoring department, unit, or organization of an event pays the expense of an accommodation necessary for any participant with a disability to attend (just as the sponsor bears all the other costs related to putting on the event).

What is the responsibility of the Services for Students with Disabilities Program in event planning?

The Services for Students with Disabilities Program (SSD) is funded to provide (and pay for) accommodations to enable students with disabilities to access their academic program. Due to its expertise acquired in the foregoing service, SSD is often asked for advice and assistance by other campus departments/units and student organizations when they receive a request for accommodation from an event participant with a disability.

SSD is limited to providing "technical assistance" to sponsors of events who have been asked to provide a requested accommodation (e.g., many event sponsors don't know how to arrange for a captioner or sign language interpreter at events they are putting on). There is no charge for this technical assistance. However, please keep in mind that the cost of the actual accommodation is billed to the event sponsor. In other words, the cost of accommodating participants with disabilities is simply one of the many costs of putting on an event, such as renting a room, obtaining video/technology, printing promotional materials, and paying for a caterer.

The ultimate responsibility for ensuring that event participants with disabilities are appropriately and timely accommodated always rests with the event sponsor. SSD is simply a valuable resource to assist the event sponsor in fulfilling its responsibility.

A copy of the following discussion should be provided for those actively involved during the event.

Interacting with People with Disabilities

When encountering someone with a disability, many people feel awkward and uncomfortable. How do I talk to them? Should I offer to help? What if I say something embarrassing? Here are a few suggestions that will help you and the person with a disability feel more comfortable.

1. First and foremost, a person with a disability is a person. They have the same variety of feelings, attitudes, and behaviors as persons without disabilities. Treat people with disabilities with the same dignity and respect as you treat those without disabilities.
2. When interacting with a participant, remember that everything relating to their disability, even the fact they have one, is legally confidential. Therefore, do not discuss or mention anything about the participant's disability where others can hear, even if you believe the participant would not mind.
3. Not all disabilities can be seen. Don't assume that just because someone doesn't look disabled that they do not need accommodations.
4. If someone with a disability appears to need assistance, ask if you can help. If they say yes, then ask how and follow their directions. Don't be offended if your help is not needed.
5. Talk directly to a person with a disability, not to their interpreter, attendant, or other non-disabled person about them. Adults with disabilities are adults and should be treated as such.
6. A wheelchair is considered part of the user's personal space. Therefore, do not touch or lean on the wheelchair unless asked. Similarly, do not touch or move someone's crutches. If the crutches are in the way, ask the user to move them.
7. Introduce yourself when approaching a person who is blind. Do not touch them without warning, as this may startle them. If they need guidance, let them take your arm. When leaving, let the person know so they don't continue to talk to empty space.
8. Do not pet or distract a service animal. The owner's safety may be at risk if the animal is distracted.
9. It's fine to use phrases like "Have you seen Bob?" with a blind person, "Do you want to run to the mall with me?" with a person who uses a wheelchair or "Have you heard from Joe?" with a Deaf person. These are common phrases in our language and will be understood.
10. Do not ask questions about the disability unless it directly relates to a service or assistance you are providing. How they became disabled or even then exact nature of the disability is personal information which they may not wish to share.

Communicating with a Deaf or hard of hearing person

Communicating with a Deaf or hard of hearing participant through a sign language interpreter can be a bit confusing at first, but here are some simple tips that will make it easier.

1. The interpreter will sit or stand near you so the participant can see both of you at the same time.
2. Talk directly to the participant, not the interpreter. For example, say "What is your name?" not "What is her name" or "Do you have your homework?" instead of "Ask her if she has her homework."
3. The interpreter will speak in first person, so when the interpreter says "I have a question" it means the participant has a question, not the interpreter.
4. The participant will primarily be watching the interpreter while you are talking instead of you. The lack of eye contact can be uncomfortable for some, but the participant needs to watch the interpreter to "hear" you.
5. The participant cannot write and watch the interpreter at the same time, so if you have asked him/her to fill out a form, please wait until they are finished to give further information.
6. If you have any questions about using an interpreter, just ask the participant or interpreter. You may also call the lead interpreter at the SSD Office 559.278.2811 for general information about interpreters.