

Guidelines to Hosting an Accessible Event

The City of Chicago strives to be the most accessible and inclusive city in the nation for people with disabilities. Therefore, as a Grant Applicant, please take the following items into consideration as you plan to ensure you comply with all applicable laws and regulations that protect the rights of people with disabilities. Accessibility leads to inclusion and should be viewed as an asset that creates a larger audience by engaging everyone.

All advertising, invitations, and brochures should have an access statement that describes the level of accessibility for your event and includes multiple forms of contact, such as: ***“If you are an individual with a disability and need a reasonable accommodation to attend, please contact (name, phone number, email).”*** Email is the preferred method, as it is the most accessible format.

When planning for accessibility refer to the following ADA guidelines*:

- Pick-up and drop-off areas closest to main entrance should comply with accessible passenger-loading zone requirements. Provide the physical address of this drop off point for those who may be using paratransit services.
- Provide accessible routes around the event space, including interior and exterior elements. To enter/exit, there must be 36” minimum clear pathway for one wheelchair. Entrance width must be at least 32” wide, with doors requiring no more than 5 lbs. of pressure to operate.
- When feasible, remove tripping hazards and changes in elevation and gaps greater than .5” (e.g., steps/thresholds).
- Ramps must have a maximum slope no steeper than 8.3%, with railing above floor 34” – 38” to the top of the railing, edge protection and railing extensions (12” on both sides).
- Event areas should have a minimum clear space of 30” by 48” in front of the transaction window, counter, or table. A 60” by 60” clear floor area is preferable.
- Fixed-chair seating should have an option that includes wheelchair-accessible spaces.
- Directional signage and written materials should use high-contrast colors and indicate accessible features using the International Symbol of Access. –above counters/booths, restrooms, curb cuts, accessible parking and ramps. The surface of the sign should be well lit and have a matte or other non-glossy finish using the International Symbol of Access.
- Websites should be accessible, by using captions and tags to describe images (to improve auditory readability).
- If sharing information (ie. Programs/handouts/agendas,etc.), printed documents should be accessible online before the event and with adequate notification to all patrons.
- *Information should be available onsite upon request in alternate formats (e.g., large font, Braille)
- Have companion seating -- accessible seating next to typical seating options for people who use wheelchairs and/or other mobility devices to be seated next to friends/family.
- Attendees who require an ASL interpreter need to have seating with a clear line of sight of the interpreter.
- Event venues should have accessible restrooms and drinking fountains available on site.
- Expect to accommodate service animals that are specially trained to perform essential tasks to assist people with disabilities. Service animals cannot be denied entrance to any public event or facility and should be provided with an accessible animal relief area.



Best Practices:

- Video recording live events help people with disabilities and all patrons who may not be able to attend to access the information later. Be sure that the videos shown are captioned. If possible provide event presentation dates or recorded audio description. .
- Designate on-site personnel familiar with the accessibility features to serve as a point-of-contact when, or if, issues arise. Provide this person’s contact information in event materials.

Resources

- Real-Time Captioning: This service converts spoken word into written format projected onto a screen during events and is typically read by those who are Deaf or hard of hearing.
 - Chicago Hearing Society (<https://chicagohearingsociety.org/>)
- American Sign Language Interpreters: A person who signs spoken word into sign language to be accessible to those who are Deaf or hard of hearing
 - Chicago Hearing Society (<https://chicagohearingsociety.org/>)
 - Language Line (<https://www.language.com/interpreting/on-demand/video>)
- Accessible Materials: Materials should be able to be provided in Braille, enlarged print (at least 18 font or larger), PowerPoint presentations should be verbally described (e.g., announcing percentages on a graphic).
 - Braille
 - Horizons for the Blind (<https://www.horizons-blind.org/>)
 - The Chicago Lighthouse (<https://chicagolighthouse.org/>)
- Assistive Listening Device (Rental): An amplifying device that brings sound directly to a person’s ears. The device can separate speech from background noise to make the information clearer.
 - <https://www.assistivelistingrentals.com/>

Suggested Wording Examples

Clearly display any/all accessible features of your event on marketing materials. Additionally, note features that may concern someone with access needs (ie. Strobe lights, gun shots, stairs with no ramp, etc.).

“This event is accessible, the accessible entrance is on the West side of the building.”

“Accessible restrooms are available.”

“This event takes place at an outdoor venue on uneven natural terrain.”

“The event has designated service animal relief areas.”

“Performance requires audience to stand for long periods.”

*Every effort should be made to select accessible spaces or make a temporary event accessible. However, in some cases, an element cannot be made accessible due to technical infeasibility. **You should be sure to note any elements that are not accessible in event marketing materials.**

Contact MOPD for more information (MOPDCompliance@cityofchicago.org or 312-744-4441).