

Accessible Event Planning

July 18, 2014

Erin Sember-Chase, MA

Technical Assistance & Project Coordinator

255-6690

ems65@cornell.edu



Cornell University



Today's Presenter



Erin Sember-Chase

Contact Us:

Northeast ADA Center

800.949.4232

northeastada@cornell.edu

Disclaimer



Information, materials, and/or technical assistance are intended solely as informal guidance, and are neither a determination of your legal rights or responsibilities under the ADA, nor binding on any agency with enforcement responsibility under the ADA.

The Northeast ADA Center is authorized by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) to provide information, materials, and technical assistance to individuals and entities that are covered by the ADA. The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the Department of Education, NIDRR grant number H133 A110020. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Northeast ADA Center



1-800-949-4232

Northeast ADA Center

...providing training, technical assistance, consultation, and materials on a broad range of topics related to disability in the United States.

www.northeastada.org

Today's Agenda



- Considering the “why” behind accessibility
- Planning and preparing accessible events
- Assessing accessibility on the day of event
- Ensuring accessibility during the event

First...Why?



“It’s the hypocrisy that really gets me. They want to say they’re ‘inclusive’, but if they truly were inclusive, they’d make sure their meeting was accessible. Why is that they always forget access? They say they don’t really mean not to include you, but the truth is they don’t set up an environment that make it possible for us to participate. They don’t really see us as partners.”

-from an employee with a disability, on the loneliness she experiences every time she attends a meeting that lacks access

First...Why?



- The Law
 - Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) & Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
 - In general, people with disabilities can't be denied access to any programs, services, and activities based solely on disability or lack of accessibility

First...Why?



“Design has the power to include or exclude, to make us feel competent or incompetent. As the designers of University environments, we are the ones who create those experiences. How would it feel to be excluded by design?”

-taken from the University of Arizona website

Accessibility Considerations



- Mobility: movement, stamina, balance
- Cognitive or Learning: understanding, ability to give/receive communication
- Health: stamina, attention, dietary needs
- Hearing and/or Speech: communication
- Visual: low vision, blindness
- Environmental: chemical sensitivity, breathing
- Psychiatric: anxiety, attention



Event Planning Considerations

- Remember the goal- how you plan for accessibility can shift depending on the purpose of the event
- Standardize- as much as you can proactively systematize designing accessibly from the beginning, the easier and more natural it is
- Budget- set aside money to cover provision of accessibility and accommodations



“When I encounter physically inaccessible places, I feel frustrated. I have to rely on others to help me get in, out or around the space which means I cannot freely explore the setting or the people in it as I might like. This can also give people the impression that I am more physically limited than I really am; it’s not because of my disability but rather because of the environment”.

When Planning your Event



Think about location...

- Check it out yourself beforehand
- Ask opinions from those with disability experience
- Involve venue staff- engage them in assessing access
- Consider not just accessibility of site/building (including entrances), but also of the surrounding area— is site easily accessible via public and private transportation?
- Check for accessible routes of travel around and within the building (i.e. elevators), including to the room itself
- Consider need for moveable seats



When Planning...

Assess the location further by asking...

- What is transportation situation? Is there accessible parking and/or easy drop off access for public transportation and paratransit? If providing transport- you need to secure accessible transport!
- Is there clear signage?
- Are the restrooms accessible?
- Is the speaker's area accessible?
- Are there assistive listening systems in place?
- Is the location free of distractions?



What kind of disabilities might this NOT be the best setting for?

- A) Wheelchair Users
- B) People with visual disabilities
- C) People with chronic health concerns
- D) People with hearing loss



What is wrong with this setting?

- A) Lack of open floor space
- B) Loud and distracting
- C) Crowded
- D) All of the above





Picture A



Picture B



Which setting might be more conducive to accommodating people with mobility and sensory disabilities?

- A) Picture A on the Left
- B) Picture B on the Right



Which of the following statements is true?

- A) This is a great setting because it's accessible from pavement, has moveable seats, and lots of room in the aisles
- B) This is not a great setting because grass hinders mobility and the parking/sidewalk is not in sight.
- C) Both A and B are true

“For me, because I do not look like I have any disabilities, I'm first afraid to even ASK for accommodations because people often feel they have the right to ask WHY, which feels too confrontational for me at a moment when I'm already feeling vulnerable. To have to stop, and explain to (educate) the other person can be embarrassing, infuriating and/or exhausting. It takes away from the energy and attention I need for the business at hand. I feel tension build in my body and a tightness to my breathing. I get very stern in outward appearance which I'm told looks "bitchy." Sometimes I end up feeling resentful, other times I just withdraw or may even leave”.



When Advertising your Event



- Include accommodation statement
- Ask registrants to indicate accommodation needs (consider using checklist on registration form) and if bringing personal aide or service animal
- Provide clear description of event, agenda, and registration process
- Provide clear directions to event site (including town, street, building, room, etc.)
- Try** to promote/advertise a scent-free environment
- Use multiple mediums of advertising (Cornell calendar, websites, emails, radio, print)

Preparing for the Event



- Arrange accommodations if requested (i.e. ASL interpreter, CART, assistive listening devices, alternative formats (Braille, CD/jump drive, large print), etc.)
- Verify what the presenters may need too & communicate accommodation needs of audience to them!
- Make sure event room will have outlets
- Make materials readable (accessible powerpoint; black on white background; large & clear font with 8 or less lines on slides; captioned videos; audio descriptions)
- Ensure activities are accessible or can be adapted
- Offer variety of food options- consider dietary restrictions



Day of event

- Arrive early!!!
- Bring extension cords, tape, and extra copies of accessible materials just in case
- Ensure ramps/curb cuts, hallways, elevators, etc. are working and not blocked
- Make clear signage, or have person, directing from all entrances to room
- Be aware of emergency evacuation procedures for that site
- Be aware of where restrooms are



*“I feel instantly shut out when a presenter says “I don’t need a microphone”- I wish they would realize that using a microphone is not about what **they** need to speak... it’s about what **I** need to hear”.*

Day of Event



- Use a microphone!!! (make sure sound system works)
- Determine with interpreter or CART transcriber where best place for them is
- Arrange seating in room to accommodate wheelchairs and service animals
- Be prepared to handle last minute requests in a welcoming manner

During event



- Face the audience when speaking and keep things away from mouth
- Provide oral description of room layout, exits, amenities, restroom locations, and agenda
- Provide oral descriptions of charts & pictures
- Repeat questions from audience
- Be ready to provide 1-1 assistance if needed
- Allow adequate time during breaks

Overall Takeaways



- Never assume accessibility – ask questions, investigate, check it out yourself, involve people with disabilities in planning!
- Promote the use of accessible sites only
- Ask participants about their experience and/or suggestions for future
- Thank everyone involved for their assistance and give them the positive feedback/results of being accessible



“When my needs are not only acknowledged and filled, but also respected and validated, I feel my whole body relax. I can breathe more easily. I smile. I feel grateful. I feel connected to others rather than feeling different. I can pay attention and more fully participate”.

Additional Resources



- CU Student Disability Services Guide to Planning an Accessible Event at Cornell: <http://www.cornell.edu/disability/events/>
- Accessible Information Exchange: Meeting on a Level Playing Field: <http://www.ada.gov/business/accessiblemtg.htm>
- ADA National Network Hospitality Initiative- Planning Accessible Meetings: <http://www.adahospitality.org/content/Planning-Accessible-Meetings>
- Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal: <http://www.ada.gov/checkweb.htm>
- Accessible Temporary Events Planning Guide: [http://www.springsgov.com/units/Economic SE/Accessible%20Temporary%20Events%20Planning%20Guide.pdf](http://www.springsgov.com/units/Economic_SE/Accessible%20Temporary%20Events%20Planning%20Guide.pdf)

QUESTIONS?



Upcoming Events



The State of Disability Law, Policy and Practice in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands

August 13, 2014

2pm-3pm EST

<http://www.edi.cornell.edu/register/index.cfm?event=4503>

School's Out, Now What? Inclusive Extra-Curricular Activities

September 10, 2014

2pm-3pm EST

<http://www.edi.cornell.edu/register/index.cfm?event=4504>

Northeast ADA Center

Employment and Disability Institute
School of Industrial and Labor Relations

Cornell University

201 Dolgen Hall

Ithaca, NY 14853

800.949.4232 in NY, NJ, PR and the U.S. VI

607.255.6686

northeastada@cornell.edu

www.northeastada.org



The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant from the Department of Education, NIDRR grant number H133 A110020. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.



Cornell University