



# Accessible Event Guidelines

Both Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act protect people with disabilities from discrimination because of their disability. By law, businesses and organizations must provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities so they can access the same opportunities as other members of the public. Event organizers are also required to ensure accessibility for all attendees and should follow the principles of universal design to be the most inclusive.

## What is universal design?

"Universal design is a concept in which products and environments are designed to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design."

Section508.gov

Events should be planned with every person's diverse needs in mind. Universal design is based on several principles, including equitable use, perceptible (easy to see) information, and low physical effort.

## Reasonable Accommodation Statement:

Include a version of this statement on all publicity materials:

"OHSU welcomes individuals with disabilities to participate in all of its activities and will provide necessary accommodations upon request to allow this. If you have a disability and need an accommodation **[such as, list examples]** to attend or participate in this event please contact **[insert the name and phone number of the department or organization responsible for the event]** at least five business days prior to the event.

This information is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact **[name and phone number of the department or organization responsible for the publication.]**"

There are many ways to accommodate individual physical, sensory and cognitive differences. You can read more about these types of accessibility on the next pages, and some basic steps to support everyone's full participation in public life. This guide is not a comprehensive index of everyone's unique needs.

# Accessible Event Guidelines

## General Considerations

### Before the Event



- Provide multiple registration options (online form, telephone, text) and offer to assist with registration.
- Include a checklist in your RSVP for attendees to request accommodations (i.e. Assistive listening device; Support-person accompaniment; Wheelchair access; Advanced copy of slides; Reserved front row seat; Low/warm light; ASL Interpretation).
- Develop an agenda in accessible, everyday language and send it to registered attendees in advance.
- Appoint staff to manage accommodation requests and be available on the day of the event to provide support.

### During the Event



- Schedule breaks, 5-10 minutes per hour is recommended.
- Request that people wear name tags with communication preference badges that indicate their social interaction readiness.
- Provide clear signage with directions to elevators, accessible bathrooms and sensory spaces.
- Ask presenters to provide materials in advance to ensure availability of printed and digital copies. Offer some large print copies as well.
- Always use microphones and ask presenters to repeat questions from the audience during Q&A.

### After the Event



- Send event materials and recordings to attendees.
  - Offer to send printed copies of materials upon request.
- Request feedback from attendees about satisfaction with, and the accessibility of, the event.

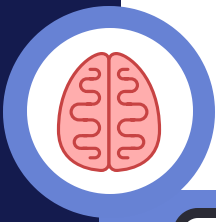
# Physical Disabilities



Physical disabilities are varied and may require people to move their bodies in ways that work for them, such as by using walkers or wheelchairs. This section relates to doors, ramps, seating, tables, and availability of elevators.

- **Ensure accessible parking, path of travel to the entrance, and entry way.**
  - Make sure there is a wide-width entrance, measuring at least 32 inches.
  - Revolving doors are not accessible!
  - Aim to have push-button access. If none, staff the event to ensure someone is present to open doors for guests.
- **Confirm barrier-free ramp access to the venue (Ramp meets the ADA minimum of 36 inches of width between handrails and the slope meets ADA standards), and elevators where needed.**
- **Offer accessible seating, which includes chairs with and without arms; chairs with higher backs (for individuals needing balance support); and space for wheelchair users to join the group. The accessible seating options should be integrated into the main seating area.**
- **Ensure that ASL interpreters are available and visible, and all videos are captioned.**
- **Use large text size for presentation slides and event signage**

# Cognitive Disabilities



Cognitive disabilities include intellectual and learning disabilities and other memory and processing disabilities. Events should be welcoming of diverse cognitive needs, including learning and communication differences.

- **Communicate using accessible, everyday language. This includes both written and verbal communication.**
- **Allow support people to accompany attendees.**
- **Offer information in alternate formats and different ways to engage.**
- **Provide a clear agenda before the event. Let attendees know what to expect for programming, timeframes, and available resources in advance.**
- **Allow people to use fidgets, stim, and move around the room freely.**

# Sensory Disabilities



Sensory disabilities include vision impairments, hearing loss, Autism, and more. These disabilities might require someone to use braille or ASL interpretation, or require low-stimulation environments.

- Require the event space to be fragrance-free. Send a reminder to registered attendees 1-2 days before the event to remind them!
- Offer sensory rooms and also quiet rooms with low lighting, limited noise, and various seating options (ex: beanbags or cushions).
- Require and remind attendees that no flash photography is allowed.
- Offer information in large print, audio and digital, and Braille.

## For Virtual Events



- Share which platform you will be using and provide instructions for meeting controls (ex: unmute button).
- Distribute slides in advance that have had an accessibility check.
- Identify a point person for technical support and share their contact information in advance.
- Have each person say their name each time they speak.
- Provide visual, image, and video descriptions consistently.
- Provide alternative ways for attendees to participate (ex: unmute, private message) if using meeting options such as polling or chat.
- Ensure CART, or live captioning, is set up and available.
- Offer to read chat and/or Q&A messages aloud.
- Use a view that shows the person presenting and ASL interpreter.
- Ensure that the environment behind presenters is not distracting or use a virtual background.

## Additional Resources



- National Disability Rights Network
- Autistic Self Advocacy Network
- CommunicationFIRST
- ADA National Network
- Section508.gov
- Oregon Health Authority



This resource was compiled by the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) in the Institute on Development and Disability at OHSU. Visit [www.ohsu.edu/ucedd](http://www.ohsu.edu/ucedd) for more information about our work.

