



Tips for Making Your Event Accessible

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities and opens doors for full participation in all aspects of everyday life. These guidelines are intended to help event organizers design events to accommodate people of all abilities. This handout is not intended to be an all-inclusive guide to ADA compliance. It is the responsibility of the event organizer to understand and comply with all federal regulations that pertain to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Basics:

- Include on your BPRD logistics plan how and where you will provide accessible parking, ADA-compliant toilets and accessible pathways. Include other accommodations you are making, such as the provision of ramps, accessible seating, etc. to make your event accessible.
- All print materials promoting your event must include the Request for Accommodation notice with the international symbol for accessibility (ISA-blue and white symbol of a wheelchair icon) as well as a contact name and phone number for a patron to request accommodation from you.
- Plans should be in place to provide sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, Braille or other alternative formats should it be needed.
- Staff, volunteers and others should be trained on how to involve, assist and accommodate people with disabilities.

Making the Venue Accessible

Particular attention should be given to the accessibility of the event location. Understanding how visitors arrive at and move through your event will go a long way in identifying and removing barriers. The ADA regulations recommend the following priorities for barrier removal:

- Provide access from public sidewalks, parking areas, and public transportation
- Provide access to the booths, displays/exhibits and activities at your event
- Provide access to public restrooms and portable toilets
- Avoid barriers to other public amenities, such as drinking fountains and benches

Accessible Routes

The path a person with a disability takes to enter and move through your event is called an accessible route. This route must be at least three feet wide and not be blocked.

- All pathways should remain clear of protrusions.
- Attention should be given to avoid trip hazards.
- Cords, wires, hoses, etc. located on a pathway must be covered with a cord cover or other similar device (such as an industrial rug taped to the surface).
- An alternate path of travel must be provided whenever the existing pedestrian access route in a public right-of-way is blocked by temporary conditions. Where possible, the alternate path of travel should be parallel to the disrupted pedestrian access route and on the same side of the street.
- If an alternate path of travel is provided, signage designating the alternate path of travel is required.

- Where the alternate path of travel is adjacent to potentially hazardous conditions, the path must be protected with a portable barricade.
- If a raised area (stage, podium, dais, etc) will be used by event attendees, accessible access to the raised area must be provided.
- If crowd control measures are to be used, plans must be in place to ensure that the path of travel is not blocked and that people who are blind or have low vision do not encounter trip hazards.
- Temporary/portable ramps that do not exceed an 8.33% (1:12) grade may be used to provide an accessible path of travel. (Example: the slope of pedestrian crossing curb ramps)
- Turf/ground may serve as an accessible pathway as long as it is not on sloped land. (ADA requires running slopes are less than 5% and cross-slopes less than 2%). Booths on slopes should be avoided.

Parking

- If parking is provided for an event, accessible parking is required.
- If no parking is provided for an event, an accessible passenger loading and unloading zone is required.
- Accessible parking and passenger loading and unloading zones are required to be identified using the international symbol for accessibility (ISA).
- Signs with the international symbol for accessibility (ISA) are to be mounted where they are visible.

Sales or Service Counters and Displays

- There should be an accessible pathway to each display or exhibit.
- There should be at least 5' of turning space in front of each display/exhibit.
- If sales or service counters are provided for the event, a portion of the counter must be no more than 36" above the finished floor or the ground and the width must be at least 36" wide.
- Vendors should be instructed to consider access to their displays by people with mobility devices.

Seating

- If patron seating is provided, accessible seating and companion seating must be provided.
- Accessible seating and companion seating areas must be identified using the international symbol for accessibility (ISA) and placed for maximum visibility.
- Portable tables are to be arranged far enough apart so a person with a mobility device can maneuver between them when patrons are seated.

Portable Toilets

The total number of portable toilets to be provided for an event determines the required number of accessible portable toilets in any given area. This number is 5% of the total, but in no event can there be less than one for each location. If a single unit is placed, it must be accessible. The placement of single units will increase the number of accessible portable toilets required for your event.

- If portable toilets are provided, accessible units shall be located on a level area.
- An accessible path of a minimum of 36" to each accessible portable toilet is required.
- Access to the door of a portable toilet must not be impeded by any barriers. Pay attention to ensure that portable toilet doors do not open outward and thus protrude, onto pathways.
- Accessible portable toilets must be identified with the international symbol of accessibility (ISA).

Service Animals

Event organizers must allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals into all areas of the event open to other event patrons. Service animals are animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities. Service dogs include animals in training being guided by a trainer. Service dogs in training should be identified by a vest or other clearly marked garment on the dog.

Steps for Success

Making events accessible and welcoming to people of all abilities is the right thing to do. Taking proactive and thoughtful measures will insure compliance with the law and contribute to a quality event. Emphasize with your event staff and event vendors the importance of maintaining an accessible environment for customers and patrons with disabilities.

Additional resources:

Listed below are resources to answer your questions and/or help you make your event accessible.

- ADA National Network (DBTAC) - <http://www.dbtacnorthwest.org>
- US Access Board US.Access-board.gov
- U.S. Department of Justice - www.ADA.gov