ACCESSIBILITY AND ADA COMPLIANCE

Among the highest Council priorities is ensuring that programming supported by the Council is available to the widest possible audience. This includes access for people with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law in 1990 and requires that all providers of public-funded programs and services make those offerings equally accessible to all people regardless of any individual's physical or mental disability. Recognizing that the removal of barriers that keep people with disabilities from full participation can be a costly proposition, the ADA allows for the gradual removal of barriers, taking into account an organization's available resources. Having a transition plan to guide your efforts is therefore essential. Even if an organization does not seek or receive Council or other public funding, it is still responsible under the ADA for addressing its accessibility.

General Operating Support and General Program Support Applicants are not required to submit an ADA plan with the application; however, organizations that receive funding will be required to submit a board-approved ADA plan based on completing the comprehensive self-assessment survey tool developed by the Cultural Access Network of New Jersey (CANNJ). Incorporating what has been learned as the ADA has been interpreted in court cases and from various self-assessment tools from around the country, CANNJ has developed this comprehensive document to aid organizations in understanding their compliance status and accessibility in all key areas: facilities, programs, marketing, employment, sensitivity training, policy, and handling grievances.

Using this self-assessment, organizations will be required to develop and submit their ADA plans online using the ADA Plan at: www.culturalaccessnetwork.org

Arts Project Applicants must complete the Project Accessibility Checklist in the SAGE system. The checklist should focus on the project for which funding is being sought. Applicants are cautioned that any evidence that is found to be contrary to what is noted on the checklist could be grounds for rescission of any grant awarded. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the CANNJ self-assessment survey tool available on the Council website to review the accessibility of facilities to be used for the project and programmatic access.

Arts Education Special Initiatives Applicants are not required to complete the Checklist since this grant category is limited to GOS/GPS grantees, which must fulfill the ADA plan requirements.

Need ADA Assistance?

Contact the Cultural Access Network of NJ c/o NJ Theatre Alliance 973-731-6582; or e-mail jmcewen@njtheatrealliance.org; or via NJ Relay Service 711

Contact the Council's designated Access Coordinator, Don Ehman at 609-984-7023 or via email at Donald.ehman@sos.state.nj.us; or via NJ Relay Service 711

Design for Accessibility: An Arts Administrator's Guide, is a comprehensive and invaluable manual on access and the ADA. Multiple copies are available for loan through CANNJ, the Council, County Arts Agencies and the following service organizations: NJ Theatre Alliance, VSA Arts of New Jersey, NJ Association of Museums and South Jersey Cultural Alliance.