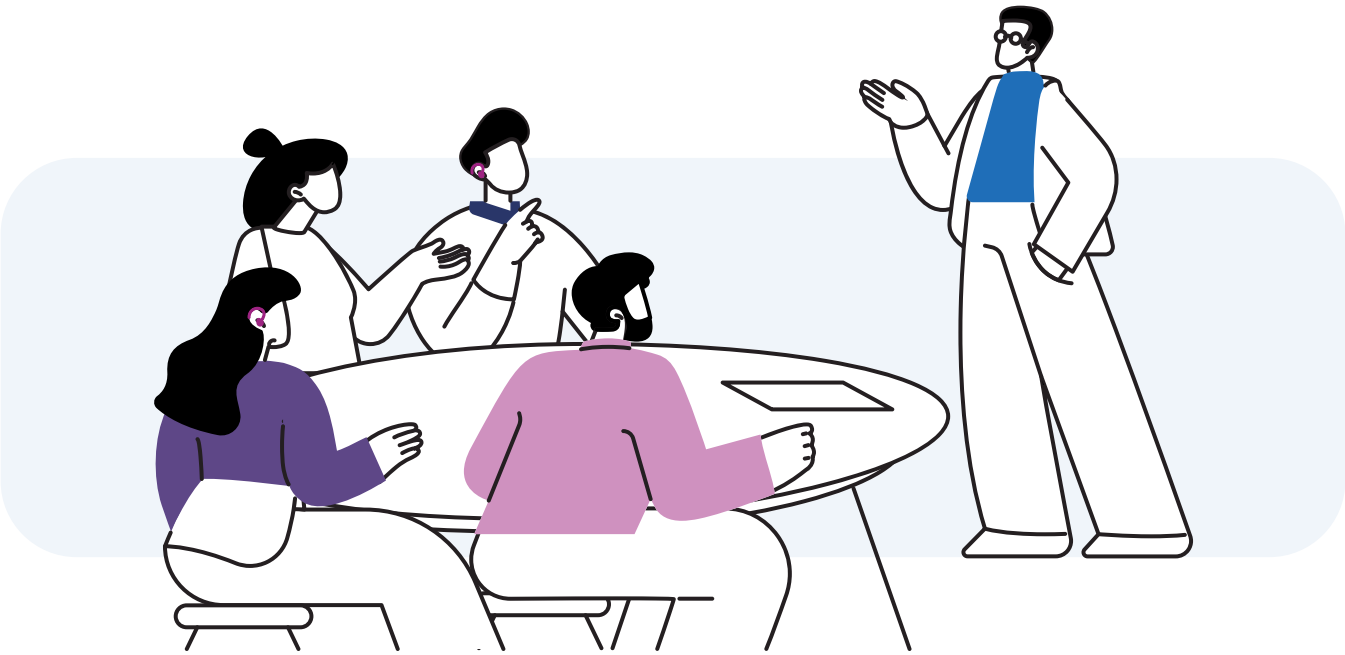
ACCESSIBILITY GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC EVENTS

Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind Attendees



Plan for communication access early to support full participation by deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind attendees. Each individual has unique communication preferences and access needs. Early coordination allows time to arrange accommodations and create an inclusive event experience.

Consider accessibility when preparing event materials, selecting a venue, arranging services, coordinating technology, and preparing speakers.

Event Announcements and Accommodation Requests

Include accommodation information in event announcements, invitations, registration forms, and promotional materials.

- Provide a clear contact method for accommodation requests, such as an email address or phone number
- Set a request deadline that allows sufficient time to coordinate services
- Invite attendees to share preferred communication methods and access needs
- Include information about available accommodations
- Maintain communication with attendees as arrangements are confirmed

Sign Language Interpreting and DeafBlind Communication Access

Identify interpreting needs early and coordinate services based on attendees' communication preferences and the event format.

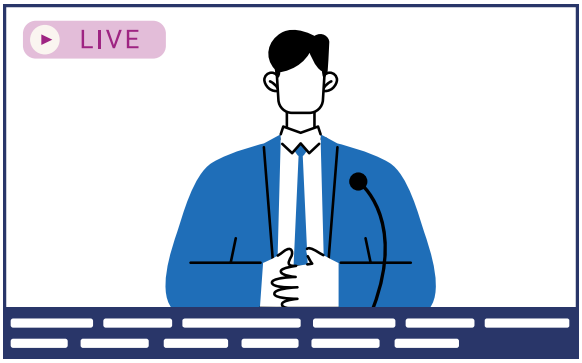
- **Sign language interpreters:** Arrange certified interpreters based on the length of the event, number of speakers, agenda, and anticipated attendance
- **Deafblind Communication Access:** Ask about preferred communication methods. Communication options may include tactile sign language, close-vision interpreting, tracking, or other individualized support. For more information, view DDHH's Guide to Deafblind Communication Access
- **Interpreter teams:** Arrange additional interpreters as needed for tactile interpreting, close-vision interpreting, extended events, or multiple speakers
- **Hybrid events:** Coordinate interpreter access for in-person and virtual attendees Confirm camera placement, lighting, screen visibility, and access to the interpreter feed.
- **Interpreter preparation:** Share relevant event materials at least two (2) weeks in advance
- **Breaks and scheduling:** Coordinate interpreter rotations and breaks based on the event schedule and interpreting needs
- **Audience participation:** Establish a clear process for questions and discussion so interpreters can follow each speaker

For more information, view **DDHH's Guide to Communication Access**.

Captioning and Microphone Access

Captioning and microphones support communication access for Deaf and hard of hearing attendees.

- Arrange live captioning based on event needs and accommodation requests
- Confirm how captions will appear, such as on a display screen, personal device, or virtual meeting platform
- Coordinate with audiovisual (AV) teams to confirm internet access, equipment, screen placement, and caption visibility
- Test captioning before attendees arrive
- Provide microphones for speakers, panelists, moderators, and audience questions
- Ask all speakers to use microphones, including during audience discussions
- Repeat audience questions into a microphone before responding
- Position captions for comfortable reading while viewing speakers, interpreters, and presentations
- For hybrid events, confirm that virtual attendees can access captions and interpreting services throughout the event



Hearing Loops and Assistive Listening Technology

Assistive listening technology can improve access to spoken information for attendees who use hearing aids, cochlear implants, or other listening devices.

- Verify whether the venue has a hearing loop or another assistive listening system
- Arrange portable hearing loops or other assistive listening equipment as needed
- Confirm assistive technology coverage and compatibility with the venue's sound system



- Provide receivers or other devices as needed
- Confirm whether the system is compatible with hearing aids and cochlear implants equipped with telecoils (T-coils)
- Provide alternative listening options based on individual needs
- Identify team members who can demonstrate the assistive technology and provide assistance
- Offer assistive listening technology alongside other communication access services based on individual preferences

Accessible Presentations and Materials

Prepare event materials in accessible formats and share in advance.

- **Plain language:** Use clear wording, short sentences, and descriptive headings
- **Large print:** Provide large-print materials for attendees as needed
- **Braille:** Prepare Braille materials in advance based on requests and identified needs
- **Digital accessibility:** Provide screen-reader-friendly documents, properly tagged PDFs, and accessible presentations
- **Advance distribution:** Share agendas, presentations, handouts, speaker names, and technical terms with attendees and interpreters
- **Visual information:** Describe important charts, images, demonstrations, and other visual content verbally

Combining visual, spoken, signed, and written information gives attendees multiple ways to access event content.

- **Video content:** Provide accurate captions for prerecorded videos and arrange sign language interpretation or other accessible formats based on attendee needs
- **Written communication:** Provide key announcements, directions, schedule changes, and important event information in writing



Venue, Signage, and Seating

Arrange the event space to support clear communication, comfortable viewing, and physical access.

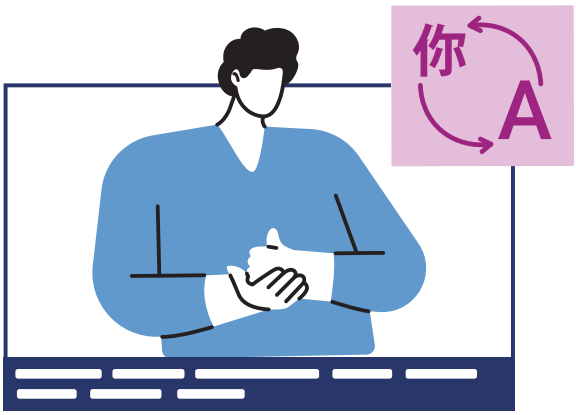
- Provide clear, readable signage with recognizable symbols for registration, meeting rooms, restrooms, elevators, exits, and other key locations
- Arrange flexible seating and clear pathways to support mobility needs and allow attendees to move comfortably throughout the space
- Position speakers, interpreters, caption displays, and presentation screens to support clear sightlines and comfortable viewing
- Provide adequate lighting for speakers and interpreters to support visual communication
- Ask DeafBlind attendees about preferred seating, lighting, distance, navigation assistance, and communication support



Live Spoken-Language Translation

Coordinate spoken-language interpretation when individuals require access in additional languages.

- Identify the spoken languages needed
- Arrange certified spoken-language interpreters in advance
- Coordinate microphones, headsets, receivers, interpretation channels, and other AV requirements
- Explain how individuals may access interpretation services
- Confirm that spoken-language interpretation, sign language interpreting, and captioning can operate together
- Provide translated written materials in the requested languages



Coordinate services based on attendees' language preferences and communication access needs.

Event-Day Communication Access

Assign a designated accessibility contact to coordinate communication access and support attendees throughout the event.

Before the event:

- ✔ Confirm interpreter and captioner arrival times
- ✔ Share the agenda and any updates with service providers
- ✔ Test microphones, captioning, interpreter video feeds, assistive listening technology, and presentation displays
- ✔ Confirm that interpreters and captions are visible from designated seating areas
- ✔ Brief registration teams on available accommodations and where attendees can request assistance
- ✔ Confirm communication methods for announcements, schedule changes, and attendee questions

During the event:

- ✔ Ask speakers to identify names before speaking
- ✔ Encourage one (1) person to speak at a time
- ✔ Confirm that speakers and attendees use microphones during discussions
- ✔ Allow time for interpretation before moving to the next topic
- ✔ Share schedule changes through spoken and accessible written announcements
- ✔ Respond promptly to communication access needs
- ✔ Check in with service providers and the designated accessibility contact as needed

Emergency Communication

Include accessible emergency communication in planning.

- Identify how emergency alerts will reach deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind attendees
- Provide visual alerts and accessible written instructions alongside audible announcements
- Coordinate evacuation instructions and urgent updates with the event team and service providers
- Establish a plan for individualized assistance based on attendee needs
- Brief the event team on accessible emergency communication procedures

Accessibility is an ongoing process.

Gather feedback from attendees and service providers to identify effective practices and enhance accessibility at future events. Early planning, coordination, and attention to individual communication needs helps create an inclusive environment where deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind attendees can access information, communicate, and participate fully.

For more information, contact DDHH:
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