

Tips on Making Meetings and Events Accessible

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Increase efforts to identify people with disabilities and welcome them to participate.

Accommodate the functional limitations of people with disabilities in order to nurture and strengthen the faith community through increased and more meaningful participation of all its members.

PROVIDING AN ACCESSIBLE MEETING SITE

Some types of access improvement are expensive, such as building ramps and installing elevators. However, as the U.S. Catholic Bishops explain in the Pastoral Statement on People with Disabilities, “Mere cost must never be the exclusive consideration, however, since the provisions of free access to religious functions for all interested people is a pastoral duty.” Other means of inclusion cost little or nothing. Many accommodations can be provided by people in the parish.

SITE CONSIDERATIONS

- Adequate accessible parking near grade level entrances, ramp or elevator.
- Accessible rest rooms, water fountains and telephones
- Adequate signage
- Appropriate seating arrangements and passage ways in meeting room
- Assistive listening devices

SITE CONSIDERATIONS (con't)

- Good acoustics, sound system and lighting
- No distracting decorations or obstructions
- Chairs with arms are easier for elderly and people with mobility disabilities
- Stairs have railings
- Check site with persons with diverse disabilities.

ANNOUNCEMENT, ADVERTISEMENTS AND REGISTRATION FORMS

- Advertise the event as accessible.
- Use universal symbols of access on all flyers.
- Include statements such as: *We welcome people with various types and degrees of disability. Please contact us if any accommodations are needed to maximize your participation in this event/program. Or: All participants are welcome. If you need special accommodations please call (insert phone number or contact information).*
- Consider offering transportation to the event.

ANNOUNCEMENT, ADVERTISEMENTS AND REGISTRATION FORMS (con't)

Access Information

Please check if you need:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ASL Interpreter | Materials in Alternate formats: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assisted Listening Device | <input type="checkbox"/> Large Print |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wheel chair access | <input type="checkbox"/> Braille |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sighted guide | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Disk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____
_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio Cassette |

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES FOR THE MEETING

Volunteers: Sighted Guides, Audio Description provider
Readers
Person stationed by heavy doors
Person available to assist with obtaining refreshments

Accessible paper cups near inaccessible water fountains, keep straws available

Sign Language Interpreters (budget for cost and reserve well in advance)

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES FOR THE MEETING

Large print hand outs

Brailled Materials

St. Lucy's School (610-352-4550)

Association for the Blind (215 627-0600)

Xavier Society for the Blind (800-637-9193)

Closed Captioned Video Materials/ VCR with CC capability

Assisted Listening Devices

PCPD 215-587-3530

NORTHEAST TOTAL COMMUNICATIONS, INC. 215-639-3377

Real Time Captioning

Deaf Hearing Communication Center (DHCC) 610-604-0450

CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation)

Voice Print, Inc. 215-463-4923

Interpreting Services

Deaf Apostolate 215-587-3913

Deaf Hearing Communication Center (DHCC) 610-604-0450

Communication Connection 610-272-4948

The Office for Persons with Disabilities & the Deaf Apostolate

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

215-587-3530 (phone), 215-507-1215 (video phone), sr.kschipani@archphila.org

