Creating Accessible Programming

Building accessibility into the planning stages of programming can eliminate barriers for participation and create an inclusive environment for people with disabilities. Below are some suggestions for ensuring that programming events are accessible.

There are three main types of barriers to consider as you create programming; physical, instructional, and attitudinal. You can use these three categories to evaluate the accessibility of your event.

Physical Barriers

- Is the building accessible?
  - Access to ramps/ elevators to enter and exit building, location of parking
- Is the room accessible?
  - Access to room without using stairs, signage to provide direction to room
- Is the space accessible?
  - Seating arrangements that allow for wheelchair accessible seating area, clear space to navigate around the room, unobstructed walkways

Instructional Barriers

- Is the advertising accessible?
  - Visual and audio formats, contain information about accommodation requests
- Does all video or audio material being used have captions?
  - The University of Texas Libraries Captioning and Translation Services can provide resources for captioning videos
  - If using material that is not captioned, be aware that it can take 3–4 weeks for material to be captioned and returned for use. Please plan accordingly.
- Will any visual material be able to be verbally described? (Graphs, charts, images)
- Will communication be accessible to everyone?
  - Use of amplification systems, American Sign Language(ASL) interpreters

Attitudinal Barriers

- Is an accommodation request included in advertisement?
- Are event staff willing to make adjustments on short notice?
  - Allowing interpreters to adjust seating, asking if assistance is needed
- Are people with disabilities given the opportunity to participate in all aspects of the event?

These suggestions are a good starting point and contain general considerations for accessibility; for more specific information please contact SSD. Programs and events may have additional accessibility considerations, depending on the location and type of event or activity.

Accommodation Statement Request

Including an accommodation statement on your advertising materials allows you to make arrangements in advance. Providing this information also promotes the attitude that people with disabilities are welcomed and wanted at the event. See below for several wording options for accommodation requests.

OPTION 1: **If you need accommodations for this event, please contact (name) at (email or phone) five business days in advance.**

OPTION 2: **If you have questions, need accommodations, or want to RSVP, please contact (name) at (email or phone).**

The contact person should be aware of how to make necessary arrangements to provide accommodations if they are requested.

Sign Language Interpreters

If a UT student is registered with SSD and needs an interpreter, the student needs to make the request through the online request on the SSD website.

Forms are available at **http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/deafhh/**

Be aware that students may make interpreter requests and show up at the event with an interpreter without prior notice. Be ready to work with the student to ensure that the seating and placement of the interpreter is conducive to effective communication.

An interpreter's job is to facilitate communication. All interaction and communication should be directed to the student.

If a member of the public is requesting a sign language interpreter, the event planner needs to make the request via the online submission form on the SSD website. (See link above) Funding sources for interpreters will vary depending on the type of event.

For questions about sign language interpreters or captioning questions, please contact the SSD Associate Director for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services at ssddeafhh@austin.utexas.edu

General accommodation or accessibility questions can be directed to SSD at (512) 471-6259 or ssd@austin.utexas.edu

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